

62

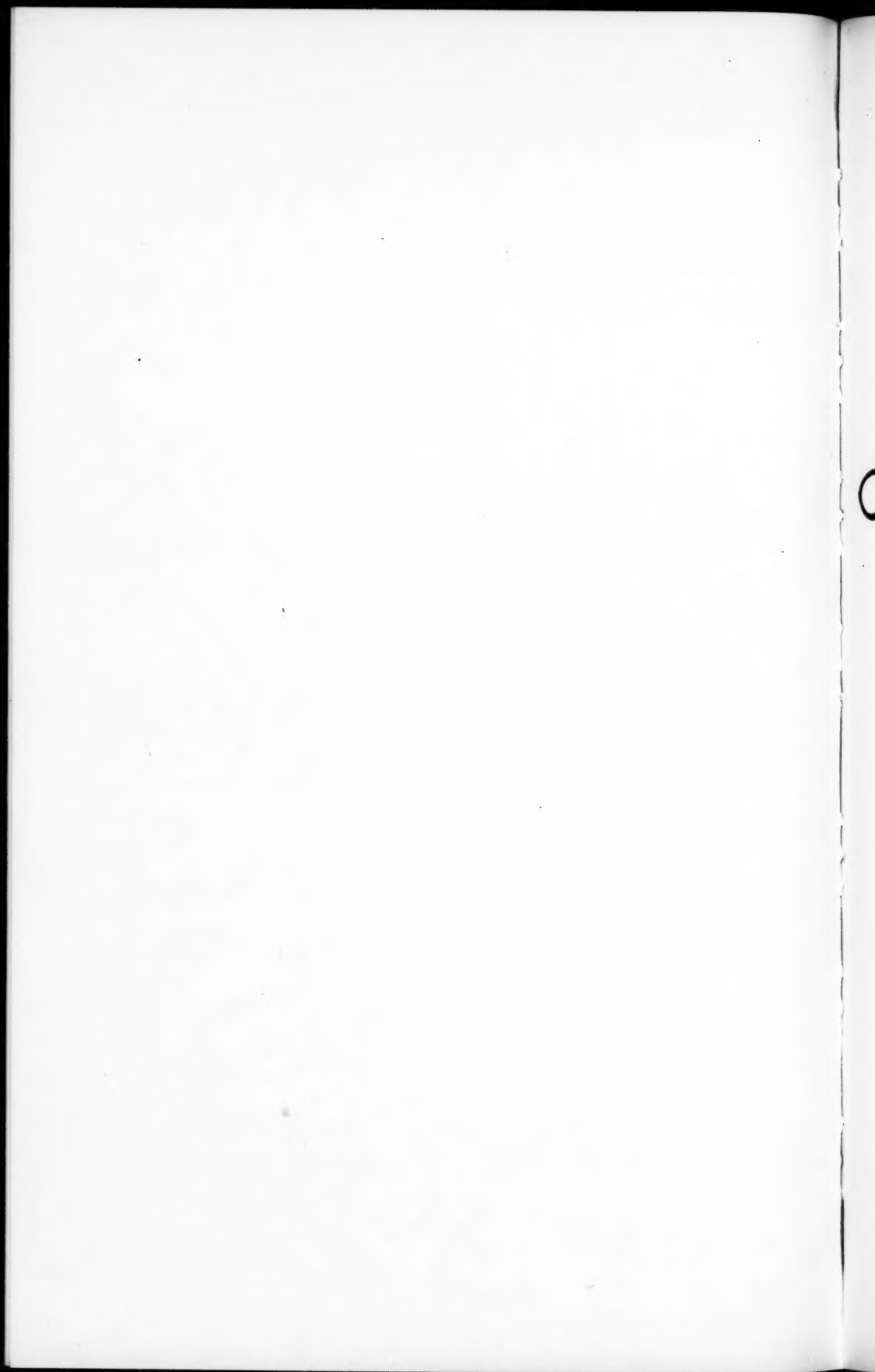
# Midwest & Folklore

VOLUME V • NUMBER  
WINTER, 1955

UNIVERSITY  
OF MICHIGAN  
APR 16 1956

PERIODICAL  
READING ROOM

Published by  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY



# Midwest Folklore

WINTER, 1955

Published by  
*Indiana University*  
Bloomington, Indiana

Vol. V, No. 4





# Midwest Folklore

WINTER, 1955

Vol. V, No. 4

Published by Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOME MEDICATION IN GRANT COUNTY, INDIANA, IN THE 'NINETIES By W. L. McATEE .....	213
SOME AMERICAN FISHING SUPERSTITIONS By EDDIE W. WILSON .....	217
THE OBITUARIES OF THE <i>Sugarcreek Budget</i> By WILLIAM I. SCHREIBER .....	221
SHOWBOATS AND CALLIOPEs By PHILIP GRAHAM .....	229
SOME SOURCES FOR FOLKLORE STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY LIBRARIES By LAWRENCE S. THOMPSON .....	237
BOOK REVIEWS .....	242
Selden Rodman, <i>Haiti: The Black Republic</i> , reviewed by Harold Courlander. M. Pasichnyk, <i>Nasha slave</i> , reviewed by J. B. Rudnycky. J. T. Hooper and C. A. Burland, <i>The Art of Primitive Peoples</i> , re- viewed by Herschel B. Chipp. Flora L. McDowell, <i>Folk Dances of Tennessee</i> , reviewed by Violetta Halpert. Violet Alford (general editor), <i>Handbooks of European National Dances</i> , reviewed by Gertrude Prokosch Kurath. Hartley Burr Alexander, <i>The World's Rim</i> , reviewed by Stanley Edgar Hyman. Archer Taylor, <i>Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California</i> , reviewed by Stuart A. Gallacher. Archer Taylor, <i>An Annotated Collection of Mongolian Riddles</i> , reviewed by W. Eberhard. Lutfullah Sami Akalin, <i>Erzurum Bilmeceleri</i> , reviewed by W. Eberhard. Iona and Peter Opie, <i>The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book</i> , reviewed by Daniel G. Hoffman. Vance Randolph, <i>Down in the Holler</i> , reviewed by James N. Tidwell. Gerald Carson, <i>The Old Country Store</i> , reviewed by Wm. Hugh Jansen.	

# Midwest Folklone

**Editor:** Professor W. Edson Richmond, Department of English;  
Chairman, Folklore Program, Indiana University, Bloomington,  
Indiana.

**Associate Editor:** Dr. Warren Roberts, Department of English,  
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

**Review Editor:** Daniel G. Hoffman, Department of English, Co-  
lumbia University, New York, New York.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Dean John W. Ashton**, Vice President, Dean and Director of the  
Division of Student and Educational Services, Indiana University,  
Bloomington, Indiana.

**Professor W. Edson Richmond**, Department of English, Chairman,  
Folklore Program, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

**Dr. Warren Roberts**, Department of English, Indiana University,  
Bloomington, Indiana.

## Regional Editors:

**Illinois:** Professor Jesse W. Harris, Southern Illinois Univer-  
sity, Carbondale, Illinois.

**Indiana:** Warren Roberts, Department of English, Indiana  
University, Bloomington, Indiana.

**Kentucky:** Professor William Hugh Jansen, Department of  
English, University of Kentucky, Lexington 29,  
Kentucky.

**Michigan:** Professor Richard Dorson, Department of History,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

**Minnesota:** Mrs. Lewis R. Jones, Editor, *North Star Folk News*,  
625 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, Min-  
nesota.

**Ohio:** Professor Tristram P. Coffin, Department of Eng-  
lish, Denison University, Granville, Ohio.

**Wisconsin:** John W. Jenkins, Secretary, Badger State Folklore  
Society, 816 State Street, Madison 6, Wisconsin.

**Business Manager:** Mrs. Elizabeth M. Richmond, Library, Room  
41, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

For Subscription Price and Editorial  
Information, see page 236

## HOME MEDICATION IN GRANT COUNTY, INDIANA, IN THE 'NINETIES

By W. L. McATEE

The truly pioneer cabin, I suppose, was scantily furnished with medical supplies and those mainly from wild plants. When farms were well established, however, the domestic armamentarium included a variety of medicinal and culinary herbs and barks. These were kept in a dry place—kitchen, attic, or cellar—sometimes in profusion. In boyhood, I saw a few such collections, but it is not of them that I write but of the medicaments employed in village and suburban homes that still included some of the materials of the herb-doctor but which were largely improvised from household supplies or were purchased from a drugstore. Still, almost all of them were things not found in the modern medicine cabinet, and for that contrasting interest, as well as for certain associations, deserve recording. Numerous helpful suggestions were made by my brother, Morris; his wife Agnes; and her mother, Mrs. Mary Alice Neely, all of whom have lived for long periods in Grant County.

*Alum.* A lump of alum was heated in a skillet or on top of a stove until the water of crystallization was driven off. The bubbly but hard, white residue was pulverized and the powder was used to treat canker or ulcers of the mouth. We called this powder "burnt alum." Large alum crystals, as obtained from a store, were rubbed on galled places to relieve pain and promote healing.

*Asafetida.* Pieces of this ill-smelling gum, tied in small cloth bags, and suspended about the neck, were worn by school-children to ward off "catching" diseases. The word was pronounced: "assafidetty."

*Bitters.* A tonic and blood purifier brewed from yellow-root (*Hydrastis*), burdock root (*Arctium*), and bark of prickly ash (*Xanthoxylum*)<sup>1</sup>.

*Blackberry (Rubus).* A tea made at home from the leaves and roots, and a purchased cordial, were used to control diarrhea.

*Buckeye (Aesculus glabra).* The large, shiny, brown seeds were carried on the person to forestall or alleviate rheumatism. They were reputed to be poisonous to livestock.

*Butter.* Unsalted butter or sour cream were used to treat sunburn.

*Camphor.* An alcoholic solution was dabbed on for headache and neuralgia. Pronounced "campfire" by extreme dialecticians; "camphire" is in the "Song of Solomon" (1:14).

*Candy.* Hoarhound and rock candies were thought to benefit victims of coughs and colds.

*Caster-oil.* This replaced the calomel of the pioneers as a cathartic. Much disliked by children, it called, more than any other medicine, for the rude treatment of "holding the nose" to force swallowing.

*Catnip (Nepeta).* Tea made from the leaves was given to young babies before a mother's milk was available. This is a convenient place to record the belief that wet-nursing was best if by a woman whose maiden and married names were the same, i.e., Mrs. Smith, *nee* Miss Smith.

*Coal oil.* Now called kerosene; a few drops on sugar in a spoon relieved simple croup.

*Cold.* Applied to throat through cloths wrung out of cold water to counteract nausea.

*Corn starch.* Soothed galled, chafed, or rashed skin—the baby powder of that day.

*Egg.* The lining of eggshell was used in drawing, or "bringing to a head," boils and carbuncles.

*Fat salt meat.* Applied to puncture wounds, especially by rusty nails, was supposed to guard against lockjaw (tetanus).

*Hartshorn, Spirits of.* A solution of ammonia, sniffed for headaches and serving in general the purposes of smelling salts.

*Heat.* Hot corn-meal and oatmeal, mushes, as well as mashed potatoes, sandwiched in cloth, were applied as poultices; and cloths alone, wrung out from hot water, would sometimes serve. To relieve muscle aches or lumbago; or to "ripen" boils and other "gatherings."

*Iron, Tincture of.* Applied with a swab in the treatment of "sore throat" and tonsilitis.

*Jimson-weed (Datura).* Leaves cooked in lard to make a salve for the treatment of old unhealed wounds.

*Lard.* Used for soothing burns.

*Lemon (Citrus limonium).* The extract was used to treat toothache—applied to the gums about the ailing tooth, if entire; or cotton saturated with it was packed into a cavity. Lemon extract blended with butter and sugar gave relief from coughing.

*Meat rind.* Skin of cured pork was given teething babies to chew on.

*Mint (Mentha).* Infusion of leaves for upset stomach.

*Mullen (Verbascum).* The leaves cooked in vinegar made poultices for the relief of rheumatism. Dried and pulverized, they

were smoked in clay pipes in the treatment of asthma and lung congestion.

*Muriatic acid*. This could be obtained (swiped) at a malleable iron foundry in West Marion. It was dropped onto "seed warts" to discourage them. An even more heroic treatment was to break off the head of a match, press it into the wart, ignite it, and let it burn there. Very mild, by contrast, was application of the "tobacco-spit" of a grasshopper. All of these were children's own "medications."

*Mustard (Brassica)*. Powdered mustard, flour, and water were used to make poultices for the treatment of headache, backache, or other ills, when increased circulation was desired.

*Niter, Sweet Spirits of*. Used for any malfunctioning of the kidneys and bladder. Crystalline saltpeter was sometimes kept in the feed boxes of horses as a conditioner.

*Onion (Allium cepa)*. Sliced raw onions were used as a poultice for congested lungs.

*Pennyroyal (Hedeoma pulegioides)*. Made into tea for allaying fever. This was one of the last, or even the last, herbs to be kept in bunches hanging over the kitchen stove; it probably was treasured by women as, taken in infusion, it was regarded as a regulator of menses. Usual pronunciation of the name: "pennyryal."

*Poke (Phytolacca)*. The berries were crushed and strained through a colander; the juicy pulp was heated and then combined with sweet anise dissolved in grain alcohol. This was a specific for rheumatism.

*Potato (Solanum tuberosum)*. Scraped flesh of the tubers was applied to burns and scalds to reduce the feeling of heat.

*Pumpkin (Cucurbita pepo)*. Tea made from the seeds was employed to expel both round-worms and tape-worms. We pronounced the word "punkin."

*Quinine (Cinchona)* Pronounced "Kwinin," with long "i" 's. We took a good deal of this drug, perhaps as a custom transmitted from the ague-suffering pioneers, though it seems doubtful that actual malaria was very prevalent. Loading capsules by punching the halves into loose quinine is a well recalled home occupation. Although the capsules were thoroughly wiped, some of the bitter principle adhered, and made their taking no pleasure. If, as sometimes happened, the drug must be taken in powder with a sip of water, the event was something to remember forever.

*Sassafras*. Roots were dug in Spring and a tea made by boiling them was taken to "thin the blood." This drink was pungent and

bitter—a far remove from the delicious tea that can be made by mild infusion of the bark of the roots. See my article on “Sassafras Tea” in *Nature Magazine* (XXXVI:13, [Jan. 1943], 52-53).

*Snow.* Was rubbed on to restore circulation slowly to frost-bitten areas. And how they burned as the blood returned.

*Soda.* A little baking soda, stirred into hot water, was the standard remedy for “heartburn” or sour stomach.

*Spice-bush (Benzoin).* Tea made from the twigs was sometimes drunk, more as a Spring-time ceremonial, I believe, than in expectation of any particular effect.

*Sugar.* A little sugar, tied in a “bag” of thin cloth, was given to a baby as a pacifier; it was called a “sugar-tit.”

*Sugar of lead.* A solution was used in dressing ivy poisoning.

*Sulphur.* Powered, it was blown through a quill into the throat for the relief of “sore throat.” Sulphur and molasses (or sugar) was a Springtime tonic or “blood-thinner.” Either in crystal or powdered form, it was burned to disinfect rooms that had been occupied by sick persons.

*Sweet oil.* That is, olive oil; warmed, it was dropped into the ear to relieve aching.

*Tallow.* Especially mutton tallow was applied to cracked knuckles in winter and was used to prevent or to cure chapped lips. A non-medical, but common, use was to soften or preserve leather. Shoes soaked by rain or snow dried “stiff as boards”; tallow, applied hot, softened them, and made them somewhat resistant to the next wetting.

*Tansy (Tanacetum).* Tea made from the leaves was taken to relieve cramps accompanying menstruation.

*Turpentine.* Was heated with lard, applied to the skin of the chest (both front and back) to relieve congested lungs.

*Vinegar.* A hot fomentation was used to allay pain; seasoned with soda, salt, or pepper, or all three, it was gargled in treating sore throat.

*Walnut (Juglans nigra).* Bruised leaves were used as a poultice.

*Watermelon (Citrullus).* Tea made from the seeds was administration to stimulate kidney action.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For convenient reference, plant names are made to agree with *Plant Names, Scientific and Popular*, by A. B. Lyons, 2nd edition, Detroit, 1907.



## SOME AMERICAN FISHING SUPERSTITIONS

By EDDIE W. WILSON

Henry Van Dyke, the fisherman-writer, has said: "But it is quite certain that since the days after the Flood, when Deucalion

Did first invent the art  
Of angling, and his people taught the same,

two honest and good-natured anglers have never met each other by the way without crying out, 'What luck?'"<sup>1</sup>

In fact, throughout the years, the American fisherman has been so greatly concerned with luck that he has given credence to widely varying beliefs and practices. These fishing superstitions include such "essentials" as: methods of insuring the presence of fish; procedures as to bait, pole, and line; care regarding proper speech when fishing; and a close observation of birds, animals, insects, trees, rain, thunder, wind, and the signs of the zodiac. Folklorists and regional writers have preserved in prose and verse these colorful phases of American folklore.

In the earliest period of American history, the Indian practiced certain rites in order to insure the presence of fish in the streams or to make the fish bite.

Lieutenant Neil M. Howison who made a study of the traditional fishing beliefs held by the Columbia River Indians of Oregon says that he found these folk—so utterly dependent upon salmon for their existence—assuring themselves of the return of the fish to the river each May in a singular manner. Throughout the entire season, upon catching a fish, the Indian would immediately take out the fish's heart and hide it until there was an opportunity to burn it. The great fear was that this sacred portion of the fish might be eaten by dogs. This, the Indian shuddered to think, would prevent the return of the fish to the river.<sup>2</sup>

Also, the nearby Snohomish Indians of Puget Sound believed that their luck in fishing depended upon a "personal spirit" which brought them success.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, according to James Mooney, the Cherokee fisherman first chewed a small piece of the marsh plant, Venus' Flytrap, and spit it upon the bait and also upon the hook. This, in addition to the reciting of a formula "For Catching Large Fish," enabled him "to pull out a fish at once, or if the fish are not about at the moment they will come in a very short time."<sup>4</sup>

This spitting upon the bait to bring good luck is common among American fishermen today and may be found in such sections as:

Louisiana, Central Georgia, Maryland, Indiana, and Kentucky.<sup>5</sup> It is even incorporated in the folk calls of the Ozark square dance:

Shake 'em up early an' wiggle 'em late,  
Pullin' in your line an' a-spittin' on the bait!<sup>6</sup>

Such emphasis upon the potency of saliva is not surprising as this bodily secretion has held an important place in the veneration of many peoples since the earliest times. Saliva has figured not only in superstitious belief but also in ceremonialism, magic, and folk medicine.

Furthermore, as to bait: In the mountains of Kentucky, if you let another person get bait from your bait can, you will have no luck.<sup>7</sup> Yet a Maryland negro may affirm that putting the bait first into his mouth will bring him good luck.<sup>8</sup>

Then it is important that certain considerations be given the pole and line. The Kentucky fisherman may say that it is unlucky to carry a fishing pole into the house, to change poles with someone while you are fishing, to let the end of your pole touch the water, or to step over your pole and line.<sup>9</sup> Yet while this last belief may be found in Georgia and among the Southern negroes, also it is thought here that the desired good luck may be restored if the party will step backwards over the pole.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the fisherman in the mountains of Kentucky, in Maryland, South Carolina, and Louisiana should guard his tongue while fishing because conversation or cursing will keep the fish from biting.<sup>11</sup>

Again: birds, animals, insects, and trees have their particular significance. In Lawrence, Kansas, it is said that fish bite best when the mocking bird sings.<sup>12</sup> In Kentucky, it brings bad luck to the fisherman if he takes a dog along with him; if, on the way to the fishing grounds, a rabbit crosses his path; or if a dragon-fly alights on his line while he is fishing.<sup>13</sup> In the Ozarks, if the little black beetles, called "lucky bugs," gather around the fisherman's cork, he may expect an abundant catch.<sup>14</sup> And in Kentucky, Central Georgia, Maryland, and Louisiana, fish begin to bite best in the spring when the dogweed is in bloom.<sup>15</sup>

Also, superstitions differ as to the effects that natural phenomena have upon fishing.

Fish are said to bite best during a rainy day or night in Kentucky<sup>16</sup> whereas in Edgefield County, South Carolina, they bite better just before a rain<sup>17</sup> and in the Ozarks they bite better after a rain.<sup>18</sup>



As to thunder: In the lowlands of Kentucky, fish will not bite when it is thundering, yet in the mountains of this same state the time to catch cat fish is when it thunders.<sup>19</sup> Also, in the Ozarks it is believed that bass will not bite during an electrical storm.<sup>20</sup>

The effect of the wind upon fishing has been summarized in a rhyme that is well-known among fisher-folk of England, Scotland, and other countries in addition to the United States in general. This is an interesting example of a transfer of superstition from the Old World to the New World:

When the wind is in the East,  
Then the fishes bite the least;  
When the wind is in the West,  
Then the fishes bite the best;  
When the wind is in the North,  
Then the fishes do come forth;  
When the wind is in the South,  
It blows the bait in the fish's mouth.<sup>21</sup>

Otto Ernest Rayburn has said that in the Ozarks:

Fishermen know well the almanac and the "popular" signs connected with the moon and zodiac. The almanac is a favorite textbook in the hills and its teachings are taken seriously.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore it is believed by anglers of this region that "fish won't bite when the sign is in the heart and stomach."<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the Ozarks you will have good luck if you fish when the sign is in the head and neck.<sup>24</sup> In Louisiana, do not go fishing in the sign of the Crab as the fish will not bite.<sup>25</sup>

Various other American fishing superstitions include: "Eat onions before you go fishing and you will have good luck"—Louisiana;<sup>26</sup> and fish bite best on Good Friday—Louisiana.<sup>27</sup> Ozark county boys leave for good luck one fish hanging in a tree near the spot they have had a large catch.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand:

The Forked River Tuna Club of New Jersey has a fisherman's shrine, and no member dares to neglect to follow the traditional lucky formula of hanging a fish on a tree before starting out on a fishing trip. Every one of the 300 odd members is confident this means good fishing.<sup>29</sup>

And finally an interesting custom occurs among the Southern Negroes:

A member of the household slyly whacks the departing Negro fisherman in the back with an old shoe as he leaves the house. In order to be thoroughly effective, however, in bringing luck to the fishing trip, the thrower of the shoe must return to the house without looking back and without a word of explanation. Again the fisherman himself will throw a shoe backwards towards the

house on leaving, or will carry money on a fishing trip for good luck.<sup>30</sup>

The field of fishing lore in the United States invites further investigation.

Los Angeles, California

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Henry Van Dyke, *Fisherman's Luck* (New York: Scribner, 1905), p. 5.
- <sup>2</sup> Neil M. Howison, "Report of Lieutenant Neil M. Howison on Oregon, 1846," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, XIV, (March, 1913), 47-49.
- <sup>3</sup> Hermann Haerberlin and Erna Gunther, "The Indians of Puget Sound," *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology*, IV, (Sept., 1930), 69.
- <sup>4</sup> James Mooney, *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* (Bureau of Ethnology, *Annual Report* 7, 1885-86. Washington, D. C., 1891), 375.
- <sup>5</sup> Hilda Roberts, "Louisiana Superstitions," *JAF*, XL (Apr.-June, 1927), 195; Roland Steiner, "Superstitions from Central Georgia," *JAF*, XII (Oct.-Dec., 1899), 271; A. W. Whitney and C. C. Bullock, "Folk-lore from Maryland," *MAFS*, XVIII (1925), 59; W. L. McAtee, "Some Folklore of Grant County, Indiana, in the Nineties," *Midwest Folklore*, I (Winter, 1951), 264; D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *Kentucky Superstitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1920), 239.
- <sup>6</sup> Vance Randolph, *Ozark Mountain Folks* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1932), 79.
- <sup>7</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 240.
- <sup>8</sup> A. W. Whitney and C. C. Bullock, *op. cit.*, 21.
- <sup>9</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 240.
- <sup>10</sup> N. N. Puckett, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926), 428.
- <sup>11</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 240; A. W. Whitney and C. C. Bullock, *op. cit.*, 21; M. M. Bryant, "Folklore from Edgefield County, South Carolina," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XIII (June, 1949), 146; Hilda Roberts, *op. cit.*, 195.
- <sup>12</sup> F. D. Bergen, "Animal and Plant Lore," *MAFS* VII (1899), 89.
- <sup>13</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 240, 275.
- <sup>14</sup> Vance Randolph, *Ozark Superstitions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 253.
- <sup>15</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 239; Roland Steiner, *op. cit.*, A. W. Whitney and C. C. Bullock, *op. cit.*, 18; Lyle Saxon, *Gumbo Ya Ya* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945), 556.
- <sup>16</sup> D. C. Fowler and M. G. Fowler, "More Kentucky Superstitions," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* XIV (Sept., 1950), 176.
- <sup>17</sup> M. M. Bryant, *op. cit.*, 146.
- <sup>18</sup> Marguerite Lyon, *Fresh from the Hills* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1945), 105.
- <sup>19</sup> D. L. Thomas and L. B. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 239.
- <sup>20</sup> Vance Randolph, *op. cit.*, 252.
- <sup>21</sup> Claudia de Lys, *A Treasury of American Superstitions* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1948), 81.
- <sup>22</sup> O. E. Rayburn, *Ozark Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1941), 9.
- <sup>23</sup> Vance Randolph, *op. cit.*, 252.
- <sup>24</sup> Marguerite Lyon, *op. cit.*, 67.
- <sup>25</sup> Lyle Saxon, *op. cit.*, 58.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 556.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 556; Hilda Roberts, *op. cit.*, 190.
- <sup>28</sup> Vance Randolph, *op. cit.*, 252.
- <sup>29</sup> Claudia de Lys, *op. cit.*, 81.
- <sup>30</sup> N. N. Puckett, *op. cit.*, 355.

## THE OBITUARIES OF THE SUGARCREEK BUDGET

By WILLIAM I. SCHREIBER

Any student of the Amish knows that these people present a close-mouthed, taciturn manner to those outside their own group. In startling contrast, the Amish customs of birth, death and burial appear in the columns of their newspaper, the *Sugarcreek Budget*, with information often unrestrained and unreserved. The *Budget* is the only newspaper that can truthfully be called an Amish newspaper because it serves the Amish and Mennonite communities in thirty-two different states and six foreign countries. A year's perusal, that of 1949, reveals glimpses of information about these people which could not be procured otherwise.

The files of the *Budget* give the genealogist a goldmine of facts. In the obituaries, as no where else, are recorded the full name of the deceased, maiden name of the woman, parents, grandparents, maiden names of mother and grandmother with the exact number of years, months, and days the person has lived; in addition, the names and locations of all children, brothers and sisters with married names, if necessary, with such honest comments as "one son, whereabouts unknown."

Excerpts from the *Budget* read as follows: "... died of heart attack at the age of 68 years, 5 months, 19 days; lived in matrimony 47 years, 4 months, 1 day, had 9 children, 3 of whom preceded him in death. He leaves to mourn 57 grandchildren of whom 43 are living, and 2 great grandchildren." A certain bishop, 89, the oldest man to die during 1949 left this amazing progeny: 270 descendants, including 7 sons, 7 daughters, 105 grandchildren, 151 great grandchildren. The *Budget* item continues: "Additional survivors are his wife, 2 stepsons, 2 stepdaughters, 4 sisters and 1 brother." At this man's funeral 22 ministers, related directly or indirectly, with 6 bishops in the group, participated. His aged widowed sisters, 86 and 87, and his brother, 84, also attended.

In contrast with this long-lived patriarch appeared another notice of the death of a child, "1 month, 6 days, who left to mourn his parents, 2 grandfathers, 2 grandmothers, 1 great grandfather, 3 great grandmothers, 6 uncles, 6 aunts, and many friends and relatives." In a similar instance, a girl age 2 years, 1 month, 23 days left to mourn "father, mother, 2 brothers, 1 sister, 2 grandfathers, 2 grandmothers, 2 great grandfathers and 1 great great grandmother,

6 uncles, 14 aunts and a host of other relatives and friends. One sister preceded her in death 18 months ago."

No mention is made as a rule of still-born infants, but a story like the following is not uncommon: "Mrs. Malinda . . . died in an ambulance on the way to the hospital after the birth of a child a few hours before. The child is well. She is survived by her bereaved husband and 8 children, 7 boys and 1 girl, the oldest nearly 14 years. Also her aged mother and 6 sisters and 1 brother who also saw his dear life companion laid in her grave 2 years ago with 10 children left behind."

After the death of husband or wife, remarriage is the almost invariable rule. One item in the *Budget* vouches for this implicitly with an account of a preacher who during the first 13 years of his married life had 7 sons and 4 daughters; his second wife brought him 7 children from a previous marriage, and they had 1 son of their own union of 9 years; a third wife, with whom he lived 7 more years brought along six children of her own. This man was therefore father and stepfather to 25 children. Similarly all widows seem to remarry if they have unmarried children, and all orphans are taken into families within the Amish community. Orphanages and old people's homes are unknown.

After reading the *Budget* columns carefully for a year, one becomes conscious not only of the large families of the Amish but also of the concomitant large number of deaths among these people. There seem to be three groups of recorded deaths: young children with hardly a family not losing an infant; men and women in their early thirties; and the older group in the late sixties, seventies and eighties. Infant mortality seems high, in part because children come into the family so frequently, in part because home cures are attempted before the doctor is called upon, and again because mother is so busy with her daily chores that she cannot possibly give adequate care and devotion, or as one Amish mother remarked: "We have no time to love our children much." Of many Amish women it is expected that they bear a child regularly every year, "just as a cow freshens every year." No wonder that they have the largest families with  $9\frac{2}{3}$  children per family in Wayne County, but infant mortality is also reputedly the highest in this section of Ohio.

It may be of interest to reproduce here a quotation from the *Gospel Harold*, a weekly Mennonite publication, which appeared in the January 5, 1950, issue of the *Budget*. The *Gospel Harold* lists 543 deaths for all Mennonites, not separating the Amish, as reported to it in 1949. Of these 291 were males and 252 were females. Among

the men were 6 bishops, 10 ministers and 8 deacons. Nearly 54% of 289 exceeded the allotted time of three score and ten years. The average age was 64 years, one month and one day. The analysis showed deaths as follows:

By Ages	By months
Under 1 year: 27	Jan. 43
1- 9: 16	Feb. 36
10-19: 10	Mar. 63
20-29: 15	Apr. 45
30-39: 14	May 66
40-49: 29	June 39
50-59: 57	July 41
60-69: 80	Aug. 38
70-79: 150	Sept. 39
80-89: 122	Oct. 45
90-99: 25	Nov. 47
100- : 1	Dec. 41

Pennsylvania led with nearly 32% or 172 deaths, then followed Ohio with 16% or 87, Indiana 47, Illinois 32, Virginia 29, Iowa 27. Many other states and provinces of Canada had less than twenty. These latter figures may also be taken as indicative of the relative strength of Mennonite populations in these states.

The causes of death seem to follow national trends, with the Amish being frequent victims of heart trouble caused by rheumatic fever. Modern diseases have invaded the Amish land with cancer, encephalitis, meningitis, Hodgkins disease, uremic poisoning, cerebral hemorrhage, strokes, peritonitis, measles followed by pneumonia, ulcers. One woman died reportedly of "heart trouble, dropsy and diabetes." Many of these reports seemed to indicate that the Amish avoid medical treatment until critical illness attacks the victim, with little preventive care among the people. Often the patient is taken to a doctor only after home remedies and patent medicines have failed. On the other hand many accidental deaths occur on the farm, like kicks by a horse, falls under wagon wheels, off a wagon, or out of the hay mows. Every year seems to have its share of drownings, burns, fatal collisions with automobiles. Examples of such accidents are for instance: "one young father who went with a blow torch to what he thought was an empty gasoline drum." Another 2½ year old child fell out of the high chair with a resultant "rupture of the brain" as the *Budget* scribe described it.

Funerals in the Amish community are tribal affairs with visitors from distant states joining the throngs of friends and relatives from the deceased person's own group. One account from Virginia mentions that "guests were present from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware and several regions of Virginia." At another funeral someone was impressed sufficiently by the large throng

to count the mourners and found by actual count "466 or 467, which, with relatives made over 500." With such crowds the following line in an obituary seems plausible: "Last Tuesday was the funeral of . . . with a large attendance. It was held in the broiler house."

The actual funeral service is similar to church observance beginning at ten in the morning. Close friends or relatives of the deceased, if they are preachers or bishops, will hold the customary two sermons and other friends will give "testimony" as to the character and their relationship to the departed. After the communal meal, interment takes place in the afternoon usually in the private family cemetery which generally is located on a tiny plot of land by a cross-road, but on the old family homestead.

The conclusion of the Amish obituaries shows a strange tendency in these people as they invariably end with a sentimental poem or jingle of 4-20 lines. Perhaps Johann Gottfried Herder was right when he said that poetry was the language of primitive people. The Amish, simple and unlettered as they are, seem to cling to the flowery, maudlin verses as a proper way to express their feelings about death. The poems certainly are not original, the lines are borrowed and are merely adapted to the particular situation at hand. One would expect the Amish to express themselves in the language they know best, in which they would therefore have a certain rhyming facility. That is, however, not the case. Although German is their everyday language, German rhymes occur seldom and only when the one mourned seems to be an older person. Because they are signed it looks as if the rhymes were by the respective signer. But even casual comparison disproves much originality apart from that exercised in substituting and rearranging a couplet or a word here and there. It seems that certain clichés have found particular favor and are often woven into the poem. Demarkation by stanzas is practically unknown.

The following German lines seem to have found the most common favor to judge from their frequency:

Endlich hast du überwunden,  
Manche schwere harte Stunden,  
Manchen Tag und manche Nacht  
Hast du in Schmerzen zugebracht.  
Standhaft hast du sie ertragen,  
Deine Schwerzen, deine Plagen,  
Bis der Tod ein Ende bracht,  
Dann wirst du im Himmel erwacht.

In the following examples the words in ( ) do actually occur, but are changed with each obituary. First names appear often within



the lines without regard to rhythm. The verse may easily be adapted to the situation in question as the following *In Memoriam* lines will show:

One long year has passed away since that sad day  
When dear (Sylvia) passed away . . .

or

. . . Oh, (Clara), how we miss you  
From our eyes tears often flow,  
For you are always with us  
Though you left us (four) years ago.

or

. . . God only knows how we miss you  
At the end of the (second) year . . .

or

. . . (Le Roy) is dead, the sad story is told,  
He died as a baby while others grow old . . .

or

(Two) years ago today  
God peacefully called away  
(Brother Jones), loved by all,  
'Twas a heartbreaking call . . .

. . . It was in the month of June  
On (Sunday the twelfth)  
When (LaVerne) was called so soon  
And left us by ourselves.

After such initial statements follows the much repeated couplet:

Oh, how sad was the day  
When dear (La Verne) was called away . . .

In the following stanza the first word may readily be exchanged with father, mother, brother or sister:

(Grandmother) was tired and weary,  
Weary with toil and with pain,  
Put by (her) glasses and rocker,  
(She) will not need them again . . .

Occasionally within a poem these consoling verses are found:

. . . All is dark within our dwelling,  
Lonely are our hearts today,  
For the one we loved so dearly  
Is not dead, he is just away . . .

The last line often shows the variant: "Is now gone away . . ." Other lines expressing sentiments which seem to appeal to compositor and relatives alike and in which only the pronouns need changing as the case may require, are:

(She) was always kind and loving  
And we all loved (her) so well . . .

or

We loved (her), Oh perhaps too well  
For soon (she) slept and died.

In the following two pairs of lines the beginning and the end rhymes have been preserved while the rest fell occasional prey to poetasters:

. . . Oh, how I longed for more words from you  
But all in vain, except a few . . .

. . . Oh how I longed to talk and shake hand with you  
But alas, you were gone too.

Confusion seems to exist whether the following lines should read "with" or "without." Both versions occur referring mainly to mother but occasionally also to father or parents:

. . . What is a home (without) a mother,  
A tender oft repeated thought,  
Yet we know not half the meaning  
Until by experience taught . . .

One may well wonder what the writer was thinking of when he wrote the same preceding four lines but the first line reading thus:

What is a home with a father  
A tender oft repeated thought,  
Yet we know not half the meaning  
Until by experience taught . . .

Bereaved parents seem to be especially fond of expressing their feelings in the following manner. But surely they cannot ring quite true when applied to large Amish families.

Dear little hands, we miss them so!  
All through the day, wherever we go!  
All through the night how lonely it seems,  
For no little hands wake us out of our dreams . . .

Here again the first line in this group may be made to read: "Dear little hands, I miss them so," or even with a name inserted like: "Dear little (Edna), I miss you so." Rarely do the verses grow lyrical in quality, as in this instance:

Now the moon and stars are shining  
Upon his lonely grave,  
Where sleeps my dear (husband),  
I loved but could not save . . .

or



Sweet little angel! How we'd have loved to keep her,  
But we know God needs some pure fragrant buds  
To make his kingdom complete.

These latter thoughts were expressed about a "tiny baby who spent her time in an incubator." These apologetic lines at times conclude the parting words of a mourning wife. But they are also found given by "parents" or "the family":

Friends may think we have forgotten,  
When at times they see us smile,  
But they little know the heartache,  
That the smile hides all the while.

Part of one poem certainly may have applied to some young person, but it seems entirely misplaced when referred to a 64 year old mother of 5 sons and 4 daughters. It reads:

The fairest lillies are the first to fall  
The sweetest first to fade.  
The fondest, dearest, best of all  
Within the grave is laid . . .

Likewise the following description referring to an Amish father seems rather incongruous when one considers the patriarchal and "papa is all" position in the Amish family:

(Father), you were mild and lowly  
Gentle as the summer breeze,  
Pleasant as the air of evening  
When it floats among the trees . . .

Old Greek mythology also finds a remnant in these often quoted lines:

Just across the shining river  
Father landed on the shore . . .

One of the few poems that seems original as far as the first 8 and last 3 lines are concerned, may be quoted in full, because it reveals a family narrative. However, the body of the work is a compilation of the customary sentimental clichés:

Softly and peacefully she passed away  
In an ambulance to be taken to the hospital, but did not stay.  
Soon her dead body was again brought home  
To be laid away in her silent tomb.

I think of the sorrow this brother had,  
 To go home to his children who were all in bed,  
 To tell them the sad news their dear mother is gone  
 And seemed so lonely to be left alone.

The Lord has ways we don't understand  
 But he is ever ready with a helping hand,  
 To help the dear ones that are in need,  
 So think of that comfort and do not grieve.  
 So farewell, companion and children dear,  
 Do not shed for me many a tear.  
 I hope you all will faithful be,  
 Prepare to die and follow me.  
 Farewell, dear mother, brother and sisters all.  
 It was the Lord's will, he made the call.  
 My time was here, the Lord knows best,  
 To take us home and give us rest.  
 The home circle is broken, but now started in heaven,  
 For the dear ones that are left behind.  
 Father and children, 7 small boys in number,  
 And only one daughter, Katie, is left behind  
 To feel the loss of a dear mother.

By an Aunt . . .

From the reading of these lengthy rhymed sentiments in honor of their departed members one must conclude that these primitive tillers of the soil instinctively feel when they speak of their dead, address their dead, or even have them speak to those left behind that the language used must be of an exalted vein "gehobene Sprache," as the German calls it. One likewise senses in lines which become trite by constant repetition, that the Amish stand here upon the death of one of their number, yet before an ever recurring mystery which becomes less mysterious by the use of rhymed and scanted language which no doubt they feel and appreciate but also cannot explain. Hence there is no regret in borrowing this poetry from the unknown originator who seems to have understood both. Death becomes thus less a tragedy than it is a test of the Amish belief in the wisdom of God's unknowable ways. Though the "home circle may be broken" the Amish nonetheless recognize unquestionably and unshakably the "Lord's will." The human incidents only go to heighten the quite acceptance of destiny, immortality, and reunion in the other world.

*The College of Wooster*

*Wooster, Ohio*

## SHOWBOATS AND CALLIOPEs

By PHILIP GRAHAM

The first American showboat was launched in 1831. In 1943 not a single floating theater was traveling the rivers, though one survivor was still doing business tied up at a city dock.<sup>1</sup> This genuine folk institution, the river theater, brought a full century of entertainment to millions along the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the dozens of tributaries and bayous, to relieve the social and cultural starvation of the new region.

These boat-shows brought their rich cargoes—honest laughter, emotional relaxation, respite from a grinding present, and glimpses of other worlds—to valley farmers, isolated factory workers and miners, and backwoodsmen who otherwise would have lacked all such opportunities. To the more privileged they brought pleasant reminders of half-forgotten culture. They penetrated regions where churches and schools had not gone, and where land theaters were for generations to be impossible. Like circuit preachers, they carried their message to the outer fringes of civilization, and in spite of their many faults it was a good message, morally wholesome and culturally broadening.<sup>2</sup> Not that there was any self-consciousness of service. These boats brought their cargoes of entertainment from the outside world for a fee, and their patrons accepted what they brought as thirsty men drink water.

The frontier had created this institution to fill a definite need, and the river theater therefore lasted only until other better means of civilizing these regions could reach them—good roads, automobiles, picture shows, schools, churches, newspapers, and theaters. Its death was as inevitable as its birth had been, for regional conditions brought about both.

During much of that well-rounded century of service, showboats and calliopes became peculiarly associated. True the showboats appeared first, by a quarter of a century, but those early boats were voiceless, unable to announce themselves to the potential audiences inland from the river landings. Papa William Chapman's *Floating Theater* (1831), the first of them all, boasted only a trumpet and a few handmade posters to tell of her rich cargo of drama at each landing. In the 1840's the popular minstrel boats such as the *Banjo*,<sup>3</sup> and even the little *Damsel*, carrying that master clown

Dan Rice,<sup>4</sup> could find scant means of making their presence known to the hundreds living only short distances from the river bank.

The calliope changed these conditions. It became the showboat's voice, the means of announcing her presence to the countryside. The palatial three-decked Spaulding and Rogers' *Floating Circus Palace* was the first to install the magnificent instrument (1858), which became at once her most useful exhibit.<sup>5</sup> No better announcer of the big boat's arrival could be imagined. For when the showboat calliope opened up, its steamy music spread as far as eight miles in all directions. Its great undulating masses of sound billowed over neighboring villages and inshore farms exactly as the clouds of steam from its pipes rolled over the gloved player at the keyboard. When its piercing tones proclaimed the glad tidings that a show was at the landing, the result was instantaneous. Dogs barked and children laughed hysterically, and both began a mad race to the river. Many grown-ups held their breath with excitement, and more than one man closed his place of business, grinning broadly as he went home to prepare his family for the evening's entertainment. The big floating palace had found a mighty voice.

The noisy instrument had made its formal debut on July 4, 1856, at Worcester, Massachusetts. Joshua C. Stoddard, the same man who had dreamed up the horse-drawn hay rake, had invented it the year before. He organized the American Steam Music Company for its manufacture and secured the patent in October, 1855. His model consisted of a series of graduated whistles with double balanced poppet valves pitched to produce the notes of the scale. These miniature organ pipes were inserted at spaced intervals in the top of a four-inch V-shaped feed pipe, laid flat on a substantial frame, and the valves connected with a keyboard, about two feet wide, at the open side of the V. When key was pressed by the player, the connecting valve released steam into the appropriate whistle to produce the desired note. The number of whistles varied from thirteen to fifty-eight. Most of the cheaper instruments had twenty, and many of the better ones thirty-two. Stoddard named his raucous instrument cal-li-o-pe after the Greek Muse of the same name, meaning *magnificent-voiced*. The river people of the nineteenth century either mispronounced it cal-ly-o-pe, or called it a steam piano.<sup>6</sup>

After the Civil War the calliope became essential equipment for self-respecting showboats. It was often placed on the top deck, where its brass pipes became no mean part of the decoration, or sometimes on the steam tow-boat, convenient to its source of power. Like

members of the cast, it "doubled," for in its quiet moments its pipes distilled drinking water. Its main duty, however, was to announce the arrival of the show to the countryside. The uncertainties of the river made advance advertising both unreliable and expensive. And then, too, in the early days when competition was keenest, showboats billed landings that they did not expect to play, for the purpose of misleading some energetic rival. Therefore even the best advertising was not always trustworthy. But when "Oh Dem Golden Slippers," "Turkey in the Straw," or "Dixie" echoed over the river valley, beyond all doubt a show was at the landing. Patrons always waited for this giant voice before deciding that a show had actually arrived. It was more than a reminder. Such music had greater power than hundreds of posters, for those merely promised for the future, while the vibrant music somehow demanded immediate action from all who heard. It was the voice of the showboat itself.

Some boats achieved popularity mainly through the skill of their calliope players. In addition to musical knowledge, quick wit and ready ingenuity were also necessary for the playing of these instruments, for most of them lacked a full scale of sharps and flats. And then, too, some of the keys and valves usually stuck in the middle of a tune. Mrs. Norman Thom of the *Princess*, or Bobby Wills of the *American*, or Ray Choissier of the *New Era* could wheedle music from any calliope. Ruth Williams, Charles Tredway, Joe Baird, Harry Sutton, and Clint Cole have charmed thousands, some gathered at the river bank, some standing amazed in their fields far inshore, some bending over wash tubs in their own back yards. Their favorite tunes were "My Old Kentucky Home," "Oh Dem Golden Slippers," "Dixie," "The Blue Alsatian Mountains," "Goodbye, My Lover, Goodbye," "Old Black Joe," and "Out of the Wilderness." Only one tune, "Home, Sweet Home," was taboo, for superstition said that the calliope playing that melody would rest on the river bottom before the next sunset.

Every calliope player was loyal to his boat, ready at all times to duel in her defense. The meeting between the *American* and the *Wonderland* at Bonnett's Mill on the Missouri in 1915 will live long in showboat history. Needham and Steiner's trim *American*, headed up river, was edging in toward the landing about eleven in the morning, preparatory to tying up for the evening performance. Calliope Red was at the steaming keyboard, announcing the showboat's arrival with his favorite, "Oh Dem Golden Slippers."

Suddenly Cooley and Thom's big *Wonderland* rounded the bend just above, on her way down the river, evidently with identical

intentions as to an evening performance. The calliope player on the *Wonderland* hurled the first insult with "What You Goin' Do When the Rent Comes Round?" Those on board the *American* understood: their rival was implying that they and their boat were discards, no longer able to make a living. They turned to Calliope Red.

"You ain't gonna stand for that, are you, Red, from that bunch of hams?"

Calliope Red, aged twenty-three, with face and hair burnt to the same rich bronze, was surcharged with passionate loyalty for the *American* and all things associated with her. His second love was ragtime music, whether it came from a jug, a saw, the tinny piano in the front of the auditorium, or the iron-lunged monster now before him. He was already rolling up his sleeves for the duel. "I'll make that fake musician jump in the river when I get through with him," he growled. Then he called down to George Emmich, the engineer: "Turn on full steam, Chief. We're gonna play calliope music till they're black in the face!"

His reply to the *Wonderland's* insult was "Mornin' Si," which means in calliope language that the persons addressed are clumsy clod-hoppers, antiquated theatrical mistakes, fitted only to be tillers of the soil.

In turn the *Wonderland* fired back with the deliberately chosen indignity, "Goodbye, Little Girl, Goodbye," which freely translated means, "Your usefulness being passed, it is time for you to leave."

Calliope Red grinned contemptuously and replied with "Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat."

His antagonist, in desperation, played "I Don't Like Your Family." Red countered with "Silver Threads Among the Gold," a pointed reference to the age of the *Wonderland*.

The calliope man on the *Wonderland's* top deck lost his temper, and his whistles screamed out, "When I Get You Alone Tonight," certainly intended as a threat.

Calliope Red acted instantly to win the day with "Get Out and Get Under." Since getting under a boat meant death, and since, according to Red's conception, death for his enemy would mean eternity in an unpleasant place, by one master stroke he had said, "Go to hell!" Truly a difficult message to send via calliope.

The whistles on the *Wonderland* became silent, and her defender slunk from the upper deck. Red bore his honors modestly, as becomes all heroes.



"I don't brag much as a rule," he said to those around him, "but when it comes to playin' the calliope I don't take nothin' off nobody. I ain't an actor or a box office man, and I don't claim to know how to run the boat better than Colonel Steiner, like some actors I know. But I know my business when it comes to tootin' these pipes. Them actors can play "Lena Rivers" and "The Fightin' Parson," and think they're the ones that's bringin' in the money at the box office. But I'm the one that's really turnin' the trick. And I know.

"Before the boat even ties up at a stand, I sit at this old thing and give 'em a concert they can hear for miles every direction, just to let 'em know We're here. All the people hear the music, which sounds like a big church organ that far away. The men in the fields go to the house to consult their women folks, and the kids begin countin' out the dimes and quarters from the jar on the top shelf of the kitchen safe.

"I whistle it up again along in the afternoon—all good ragtime stuff. Then at 7:30 sharp I turn loose with a grand medley of patriotic airs and march stuff. They can't resist. Nobody could. It brings 'em out like the sunshine brings the flowers. I simply stand up here like a big magnet and draw 'em down to the boat."

The little group around the calliope was already beginning to scatter. "Red, you wouldn't brag, would you?" jibed the cook, who had himself been drawn up to the top deck by the excitement of the combat. But the slightly stoop-shouldered, energetic figure at the keyboard, intoxicated with his own music, had already started on his favorite subject.

"This calliope is the best on the rivers, barrin' none," he announced. "She's got thirty-two whistles, all copper and brass, and they hold electricity like a storage battery. They pick it up out of the air after a storm. Many a day I've stood up here playin' when I got a shock every time I touched a key. You got to be crazy about your job when you stick to a thing like that. You hear actors talking about the specialties they do between acts. Some of 'em *are* good, I'll admit, but sometimes they get the swell-head. Once we had a girl in the show that bragged about singin' with a brass band. Say, if she'd had voice enough to stand up here and sing with this steam baby, she'd been some singer, now wouldn't she?"

Red reached over to tinker with some sticking valves. He would have explained to you that any calliope always seems to have some dead keys. His blue cap had slanted to a jaunty angle, and his bandsman's red coat was a little too short to meet the blue trousers.

When he had adjusted all to his satisfaction, he turned on the steam again and struck up, "I Love the Ladies." Some of those on the deck below clapped their palms over their ears, for after the temporary lull the new burst of music seemed literally to smash the silence. But Calliope Red, whose real name was Bobby Wills, just grinned with sheer joy in the love of his work.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile the fast gathering crowd on the bank had not been unaware of the dramatic contest. The prolonged concert had brought most of the village down to the landing, and children of all ages lined the water's edge. Some of them were running up and down, and all of them were shouting and waving at the boats. A dozen dogs had caught the excitement of the occasion, and were punctuating the other noises with staccato barks.

The big *Wonderland*, now silent except for the flailing of the energetic little stern wheeler pushing her, continued on down the river to a lower stand. The *American* eased her gangplank into position to welcome visitors and to receive early ticket buyers. Her sign<sup>8</sup> announced:

---

Tonight at 8  
TILDY ANN  
With Three Full Vodvil Acts  
and  
Special Music  
Admission 60c, 40c, 25c

---

More than any other object, the calliope became the symbol of the showboat, its reverberating echoes inseparable from the glamor of the stage and the beauty of lighted rivers. Even now when its strains float over river water, the old spirit lives again for anyone who has ever seen a showboat performance. Owners seemed as sentimental in this matter as patrons. Many a seasoned show veteran at the end has carried away from his boat only the calliope, as best representing to him what his life had been. Norman Thom reserved only the calliope when his *Princess* was dismantled in 1928, and carried it to his home in Beverly, Ohio. Eugene Eisenbarth was rebuilding and improving his calliope in the basement of his home in Marietta long after he had retired from his *Floating Theater*. Ray Choissier bought the *Water Queen's* mud-covered calliope in 1938



for \$200 after the old boat had sunk. He stored it in his garage in New Orleans, and steadfastly refused to sell it to a movie corporation for three times that sum, much to the bewilderment and disgust of the business-like representative of the film company. In speaking of the incident to an old friend, Ray merely remarked, "Ah well, we meet some strange people in this world."

University of Texas

Austin, Texas

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Information herein printed comes largely from manuscript sources (or copies) now in the author's possession, such as scrapbooks, diaries, letters, posters, and handbills, and also from interviews with showboat captains, musicians, and actors. For details concerning boats mentioned see the author's *Showboats: The History of an American Institution* (Austin, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Elfer in *Inn Dixie* (New Orleans, June, 1948); Deck Morgan in *N. Y. Times*, May 13, 1934; W. W. Stout in *Saturday Evening Post* (Phila., Oct. 31, 1925); Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It* (St. Louis, 1880), 107ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Keeler, *Vagabond Adventures* (Boston, 1870), 214-220.

<sup>4</sup> Anon. (Rice himself?), *Sketches from the Life of Dan Rice* (Albany, 1849). A copy of this very rare book is in the collection of Mr. Franklin J. Meine, Chicago. See also Natchez (Miss.) *Courier*, Oct. 23 and Nov. 3, 1852; Edward LeRoy Rice, *Monarchs of Minstrelsy*, (N. Y., 1911), 23-27, 410ff.; *Dictionary of American Biography*, XV, 536.

<sup>5</sup> Keeler, *Vagabond Adventures*, 172-6, 190, 192, 201; Earl May, *The Circus from Rome to Ringling* (N. Y., 1932), 78ff.; Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones* (Durham, N.C., 1930), 227; Natchez (Miss.) *Courier*, Oct. 6, 1852; Council Bluffs (Iowa) *Bugle*, May 5, 1858; *Missouri Courier* (Hannibal), May 12, 1853.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Alexander Clark (Princeton Library, Archives) and Mr. Harry High (Evansville, Ind.), band leader on three showboats, have supplied information about calliopes and showboat music.

<sup>7</sup> This story, here edited, is from Norman Thom's scrapbook. Thom owned and captained two showboats.

<sup>8</sup> Poster in possession of author. Mr. Tommy Windsor, showboat entertainer and actor (Marietta, Ohio), has a fine collection of posters and handbills.

## **Midwest Folklore**

### ***Subscriptions and Editorial Information***

Annual subscriptions to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* are \$3.00 to libraries, schools, and individuals not members of cooperating regional folklore societies; members of cooperating regional societies may subscribe to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* for \$2.50 if their subscriptions are made through the treasurers of their respective societies. Single copies may be obtained for \$1.00. Correspondence regarding subscriptions and business matters should be directed to the Business Manager, Mrs. Elizabeth M. Richmond, Library, Room 41, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Articles for publication should be submitted to the appropriate Regional Editor or directly to the Editor, W. Edson Richmond, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Books for review should be sent to the Review Editor, Daniel G. Hoffman, Department of English, Columbia University, New York, New York.

Manuscripts submitted for publication should be typed double-spaced on 8½ x 11 paper; footnotes should be typed double-spaced with a triple space between each note at the end of the article. Titles of books and journals should be italicized; titles of articles, chapters of books, poems, reports, etc., should be placed in quotation marks. A style sheet is available on request.

## SOME SOURCES FOR FOLKLORE STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY LIBRARIES

By LAWRENCE S. THOMPSON

The snowballing acquisitions of books and manuscripts in our larger university libraries frequently tend to bury many valuable folklore source materials in the larger masses of books and documents. A full-length book could be written on special opportunities for work with research materials in any collection of more than a half million volumes, and this note will attempt to identify only a few of the significant collections in the University of Kentucky Libraries. Such notes on the holdings of every library in the Midwest would be an invaluable aid to folklorists in our region.

This essay will deal with collections of (1) printed materials, (2) manuscripts and scrap books, and (3) combinations of both. However, it must be remembered that no research is feasible without the supporting materials that are available in every large research library, without the dictionaries, encyclopedias, journal files, proceedings of learned societies, and so on. Lichtenberg's aphorism that "The whole man must move together" can be applied to libraries as well as to human life.

One of the most suggestive collections is the Kentucky fiction which has been brought together at Lexington. From the work of Gilbert Imlay, "the handsome scoundrel" to Henry Giles' charming descriptions of the peaceful ridge country in Adair County, the Kentucky scene has fascinated novelists for 150 years, and there is a great deal of material for the folklorists here. There is a wealth of mountain tradition, custom, and superstition in the work of John Fox, Jr., James Still, Henry Hornsby, Janice aand Henry Giles; and many others. Even lesser figures, who write about the Kentucky hills are likely to use much authentic and often little known folklore in their books. There is no trace of the fine old custom of cat-shaking in any of the journals or reference books, but Louise Murdock (*Almetta of Gabriel's Run*) and Lettie Saylor (*Cradle Valley*) have recorded it. There is room for a half a dozen studies on folk etymologies of curious places names in different sections of the commonwealth as the novelists have defined them, and at least one good study could be written on the varying and often fantastic etymologies for the name of Kentucky. The traditions and customs of the Louisville slums, the fundamentalist country churches, Kentucky politicians and even Bluegrass society are but a few other facets for research in this material.

The sixty-odd dime novels set in Kentucky and perhaps as many more which deal with early days in the great interior valley are a rich and hitherto unexploited source for the tall tale, the folksong, the proverbial expression, the riddle, legend, tradition, and superstition. The tall-tale telling scout, the folk-song-singing, Indian-killing comic Negro, the comic Irishman, Dutchman, or New Englander, and the Jovial river pilot with his interminable stock of river lore offer a fertile field for research. Many of Mr. Beadle's hacks picked up authentic accounts of frontier traditions and customs from old settlers, and their notes on these points are as significant as anything in the Lyman Draper papers (available on microfilm in the University of Kentucky Libraries).

The large collection of Civil War fiction offers somewhat less spectacular opportunities for folkloristic studies. Still there are such likely subjects as the Morgan legend, well fertilized by the products of American novelists. Many titles in this collection contain almost forgotten soldier songs, and there are occasional rewarding glimpses into the 'psyches of Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, particularly their language and superstitions. Many historical misconceptions—especially those which are favorable to the South—have been perpetuated intentionally by pro-Confederate novelists; and this aspect of the war has long been in need of dispassionate, objective study. Some of the fiction dealing with the pre-war era and Reconstruction could well be combed for otherwise unknown bits of Negro folklore.

Nineteenth century newspapers are an unparalleled source for knowledge of American folkways, but they have been used entirely too little by discriminating scholars. The tall tale, folk medicine, local tradition, popular poetry, and the exploits of semi-legendary folk heroes are but a few of the materials that appear in abundance in the press of the last century. Lexington offers unusual advantages for this type of research, since the University of Kentucky Library owns extensive files of nineteenth century Louisville and Frankfort papers with good representations from other early communities, and the Lexington Public Library has comprehensive collections of Lexington newspapers beginning with John Bradford's *Kentucky Gazette* in 1787.

Related in significance to the newspaper files is the Crossman Collection of clippings from New England newspapers on the Civil War, dealing not only with military and political action but also with incidents of the war, legends of individual exploits, and soldier terminology. The collection of illustrated comic valentines in the Crossman scrapbooks is worthy of detailed study as examples of folk humor during the 1860's.

For a number of years a special effort has been made to build a comprehensive collection of early western travel in the University of Kentucky Libraries; and this collection, together with the materials in the Samuel M. Wilson Library acquired by the University in 1946, includes virtually all significant editions of important travellers in the Midwest in the nineteenth century. The value of such works as those of Imlay, Michaux, Flint, Bremer, Trollope, and scores of others cannot be overemphasized as sources of our knowledge of midwestern manners, customs, traditions, and popular lore of all sorts. For example, a large proportion of the novelists who wrote about Kentucky in the second quarter of the last century used Timothy Flint's *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (1826) as their principal source.

The Wilson Collection has already been described by Dr. Jacqueline Bull in the *Register* of the Kentucky Historical Society, XLVII (January, 1949) pp. 52-54. Judge Wilson was an earnest collector of all manner of Kentuckiana, and his collection is full of travel and description, *belles lettres* by Kentucky authors, religious, social and economic materials relative to the Ohio Valley, early imprints, and Kentucky history. The Wilson Collection is as valuable a source for the legend of the Swift Silver Mines and the fabulous stories about Nancy Hanks as it is for Henry Clay or the Tobacco War. It is replete with the legend of Kentucky politics, and such famous tales as those surrounding the Beauchamp-Sharpe Tragedy (the Kentucky Tragedy) and the Goebel assassination can be studied to best advantage here. Judge Wilson's library reflects an abundance of fact and fiction about Kentucky church history, of Presbyterians and early Campbellites as well as of other Protestant denominations.

At present the University of Kentucky Libraries are attempting to bring together in one place every scrap of Kentuckiana not presently in the general collections or the Wilson Collection. One aspect of this policy is to photostat or microfilm all of the some three hundred titles in J. Winston Coleman's *Bibliography of Kentucky History* which are not in the University of Kentucky Libraries at present. Within less than a year after this article appears it is expected that this project will be virtually complete.

Even more interesting to the folklorist than the Presbyterian and Campbellite material are the voluminous manuscripts relative to the Shakers in the Ohio Valley, above all at Pleasant Hill (Mercer County) and South Union (Logan County), Kentucky. Relatively few originals are held by the University of Kentucky Libraries, but a large body of material in private hands and in other public col-

lections has been photostated or microfilmed. For example, the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland and the Filson Club in Louisville have generously permitted the microfilming of their manuscripts. It is hoped ultimately to bring the entire corpus of this material together. To the folklorist it is important for the visions (in the diaries), the music (with hymns frequently characterized by *Kontrafraktur*), the dances, the traditions of Shakerism, Shaker speech, costume, and domestic customs.

The Roman Catholics have probably been fully as important as the Presbyterians and Campbellites in Kentucky culture, but their records have been given much less systematic attention. Most famous of all is the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani near Bardstown. A priceless source for the life and traditions of these strictest of the Cistercians is in the papers of the late Young Ewing Allison, the largest group of which exists in the University of Kentucky Library, although some are in the Filson Club. A Protestant himself, Allison still knew and loved Gethsemani as no other Kentuckian. In addition to the Trappist materials in the Allison papers, there are fugitive newspaper articles, often from files that no longer exist, and other documents relative to the legends and traditions of Kentucky, above all Allison's native country near Henderson.

The country store records so fully exploited by T. D. Clark in his *Pills, Petticoats and Plows* (1944) still offer a mine of unexploited source materials to the student of folk medicine, folk speech, popular eating habits, domestic customs, and even superstition. Meticulous examination of these voluminous and tedious records will be rewarding to anyone who is interested in any aspect of nineteenth century culture.

The general manuscript collections of the University of Kentucky contain several diaries which reflect the daily life of nineteenth century Kentuckians in a manner that will excite the interest of the folklorist as well as the historian. The customs, legends, and traditions of Bourbon County are nowhere reflected better than in the diaries of Captain James Rogers, covering the mid-nineteenth century. The Bedford Diaries cover the period from 1859 to 1902 and include weather observation and information and misinformation about livestock and the family's health.

Special efforts have been made to bring together a comprehensive collection of Kentucky cook books, political broadsides, and fugitive pamphlets. Some of this material is fairly well catalogued, and all is generally available through its primary identifying characteristics. One reference tool of special value is a comprehensive index on cards



to the *Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, and there is a partial index to the early files of the *Kentucky Gazette*, in which the original version of such famous tales is that of the school-master and the wildcat (cf. James Lane Allen's *Choir Invisible*) first appeared.

In the *Journal of American Folklore*, LX (1947), pp. 329-344, this writer contributed a compendium of printers' traditions and customs under the caption of "The Customs of the Chapel." Since going carefully through the materials in the James A. Anderson Typographical Collection and several important additions to this basic archive of the graphic arts, it is clearly apparent that this article could be expanded several times. Printers, engravers, and binders have their own world of tradition.

The large collection of original manuscripts, letters, and papers of Kentucky authors must be consulted by any investigator who is working on a particular novel, story, or collection of poems. The marginalia on the original manuscripts, the material deleted by editors, and authors' correspondence are likely to contain further notes on any special point.

The notebooks of John Jacob Niles have been photographed and a copy deposited in the University of Kentucky Libraries, but this material is not presently available for use by scholars.

Part of the extensive collection of eighteenth and early nineteenth century English chap-books is described in the *Occasional Contribution* No. 34 (1952) of the University of Kentucky Libraries. The collection includes pamphlet accounts of calamities and sensational phenomena of nature, toasts, charms, superstitions, tricks of prestidigitation, and popular versions of famous historical events. The collection has considerable significance not only for its substantive value but also as a reflection of the popular mind in Britain during the age of Johnson and the Napoleonic and regency periods. The chap-books are supplemented by a comparable collection of broadsides covering the same period.

These notes point to only a few of the important sources for the study of folklore in Lexington, but general collections of books and manuscripts often contain unsuspected materials for studies in this field. An order book of a fiscal court may reflect a witchcraft trial, a set of depositions may report otherwise unrecorded local superstitions, or an unpublished literary manuscript may contain unknown proverbs and other aspects of folk speech. A note of this sort can be best concluded with the barker's "It's all here, folks! Come an' git it!"

University of Kentucky

Lexington, Ky.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### AREA STUDIES

*Haiti: The Black Republic*, by Selden Rodman. (New York: Devin Adair, 1954.) xvii + 168 pp. \$5.00.

Haiti has waited for a long while for a guidebook to serve the visitor who hasn't too much time to waste but who really wants to know some worthwhile facts about the country and its people. *Haiti: The Black Republic* goes a long way toward filling this need. The author, Selden Rodman, who is best known in connection with Haitian affairs through his *Renaissance In Haiti*, has attempted to give, in addition to facts and information about places, a certain insight into Haitian life, economics, history, and artistic activity. Since this is a book for the tourist, or at least the newly arrived visitor, one could not properly expect any particularly deep probing into Haitian themes or problems. What we find is a broad scanning of the scene, with pauses here and there for more detailed and intimate views. Two chapters of the book, on religion and the arts, have been dealt with in this way.

"Men Possessed and Living Gods" (Chapter V) deals with the religions of Haiti. Mr. Rodman estimates that about sixty percent of the population is nominally Catholic, and about ten percent affiliated with various protestant sects. The preponderant part of the *Vodounists* (or *Vaudouists*, as Mr. Rodman prefers to spell it)—those belonging to African cults—is found mainly within the nominally Catholic segment. Catholic orthodoxy has presented no serious obstacles to the preservation of African cults and African concepts of life and death. Apart from a continuing propagandizing effort against African cult activities, and sporadic acts of open hostility, the Catholic Church has been implicitly permissive. It has allowed the devotee of *Vodoun* to participate in Catholic rites without cutting himself off from African belief. While it would be quite impossible for a man to be a Seventh Day Adventist and a Catholic (or a *Vodounist*) at the same time, it is possible, and has been throughout Haitian history, for a Haitian to attend Catholic Mass and serve the pantheon of *Vodoun* deities at the same time. One of the results of this permissive attitude is the intrusion of Catholic ritual and symbolism into *Vodoun* and the coloration of some Catholic ritual with surviving African attitudes.

Though more familiar with Haitian life than most non-Haitians, Mr. Rodman is very respectful of the work done by a number of



scholars and writers in depicting what *Vodoun* is and what it is not. He is generous in his attributions to sources, and in the process he has been able to demonstrate how much has been written on the subject, as well as to convey some of *Vodoun's* significance and inner meanings. Yet much work has been done since William Seabrook's part-seen, part-dreamed book *The Magic Island*, and it is questionable whether the section on *Vodoun* should begin with a 200 word extract (regardless of its literary quality) from that book. It certainly does not give a fair picture of Mr. Rodman's high degree of discrimination; and this discrimination is made evident a few pages later in the chapter when Seabrook is identified as a literary entrepreneur rather than an honest and careful reporter.

Incidentally, this reviewer feels obliged to take issue with the suggestion that *Vodoun* activities were at a standstill during the U.S. military occupation. Mr. Rodman quotes the Haitian scholar Dr. Price Mars as saying it was impossible for him to even "stage" a ritual dance for Seabrook in those days, and that Seabrook got most of his information about *Vodoun* activities from Price Mars' pre-Occupation notes. While one would not care to speculate on the source of Seabrook's facts and fantasies, and while it is true that during the Occupation the practice of *Vodoun* was relatively difficult, the best testimony of informed Haitians and the observations of this reviewer indicate that *Vodoun* activities continued throughout this entire period. Sometimes they were secretive, sometimes disguised, but there was no moratorium on rites for the deities and the dead. During the last two years of the Occupation I witnessed half a hundred or more such rituals.

In another reference, Mr. Rodman apparently accepts the view that *Vodoun* was originally based on the "Serpent Cult of Dahomey," and that it assumed its "characteristic shape"—that is, its modern form—during a seventy-year period of Catholic exclusion. The first of these assumptions has been made frequently in the early literature on Haiti. But there were numerous cults among the Dahomeans, and if the "Serpent Cult" activities were observed in colonial days in Haiti it does not have to indicate that general *Vodoun* concepts were based on serpent worship. There are so many survivals of other cult concepts and rituals—from Dahomey, Nigeria, Northwest Africa and the Congo—that this stress on serpent worship, even historically, seems disproportionate. As to *Vodoun* achieving its "characteristic shape" during the period of Catholic exclusion, it must be conceded that acculturative and disruptive forces were probably felt less acutely during those years.

But the shape of *Vodoun* must have been there. There is too much clearly recognizable survival today from orthodox Dahomean and Yoruba practice to permit any other view.

These are, of course, minor points. Mr. Rodman makes no issue of them, and merely presents them as widely-held views.

As indicated earlier, the author uses the spelling *Vaudou* as a matter of personal choice. There is no logical argument against it. Herskovits uses the spelling *Vodu*. Milo Rigaud spells it *Voodoo*; George E. Simpson, *Vodum* (after shifting from *Vôdoun*); Odette Mennesson-Rigaud, *Vodou*; Courlander, *Vodoun*; Robert A. Hall, Jr., *Vaudoun*. There is no room here for argument as to the merits of one as against the others. But it is obvious that the time for a peace settlement is long overdue.

Chapter VI, "Renaissance of the Seven Arts," devotes a small section each to folk crafts, music, dancing, poetry and the novel, architecture, sculpture, and painting. Probably no American is more competent to discuss modern developments in the Haitian arts than Rodman, particularly in regard to painting, sculpture, and literature. He gives considerable attention to the rise and development of the "primitive" painters during the last decade or so and provides background information on a good many of them. There is little to question in this chapter, unless it is whether the term "renaissance" is appropriate to the development of a large number of "primitive" and other painters where virtually none existed before. It is true that there were other artists and sculptors among the élite prior to the new movement, most of them schooled in, or copyists of, heroic or romantic European traditions. By and large, however, there was hardly any serious or significant painting in Haiti in the past. And the modern movement was not, as is so often suggested, a logical development of primitive folk art. There was, as Mr. Rodman says, a basic creative urge needing a new outlet. The movement, however, seems to have been artificially inseminated, and to have little real connection with the past. On the whole, painting is a new art in Haiti. It is a healthy and fertile art, however, and will probably flourish to the extent that artists are not expected to remain "primitive" to retain their popularity.

It is regrettable that too little attention has been paid to the traditional, "pre-modern" crafts of the Haitian. It is not many years since there could be found in almost any village market such things as clay animal figurines, decorated clay pipe bowls, etched calabashes and gourds, carved walking sticks, and burlap squares with patterns (abstract, stylized, and realistic) painted with native dyes.

Nevertheless, the chapter on the arts will certainly give the visitor to Haiti a tremendous amount of basic information about the much-advertised "renaissance." One supposes that the roster of painters included in the chapter is a selective one, since some familiar names, such as that of Pétion Savain, are missing.

Viewed, however, as a guidebook, rather than an exhaustive treatment of *Vodoun* and the arts, *Haiti: The Black Republic* is unquestionably a successful piece of work, and a "must" for first-, second- and even third-time visitors to that country.

New York, N.Y.

Harold Courlander

*Nasha slave—etnografichnyj zbirnyk—opys sil i mistechok poludnevoi Rohatynshchyny* [Ethnographic materials from the area of Rohatyn, Western Ukraine] by M. Pasichnyk. (Winnipeg: The New Pathway, 134 Alexander Avenue, 1954.) 72 pp. No price listed.

This is an interesting collection of ethnographical data concerning the material, spiritual and social culture of the West-Ukrainian peasants in the region of Rohatyn, south of Lviv, the capitol of Galicia. The emphasis is laid on the village of Vyshniv, the native place of the author, but also the neighbouring settlements are described. The author, now residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, offers in his book data from the time between two World Wars and in view of the sociological, economic, and political changes which Western Ukraine has made since the end of the second War under the communist regime, much of his information has already an historical value. One of the most valuable parts in the book is data about the folklore from that area: legends, traditions, folksongs, tales, etc. A map of the region is reproduced on page 69. Bibliography is given on page 71. The book, published by the author himself, is a valuable contribution to the Ukrainian as well as to American ethnology and folklore. The American historian and sociologist will notice with interest a special chapter devoted to "Transatlantic emigration" (pp. 39-40) in which the names of Ukrainian settlers (particularly in Illinois) are given.

University of Manitoba,  
Winnipeg, Canada.

J. B. Rudnycky

## FOLK ART

*The Art of Primitive Peoples.* J. T. Hooper and C. A. Burland. (London: Fountain Press, 1953.) 168 pp., 68 plates.

The appearance recently of several new books on primitive art seems to be one manifestation of a widespread movement which has seen the emergence of art galleries devoted exclusively to the art of primitive peoples, and the inclusion of courses on this subject as part of the art-history curriculum in several colleges and universities. The collecting of primitive art has at the same time entered upon a second phase, now that no more objects are to be obtained from the people who made them, where the field of exploration is the more widespread but less inaccessible museum and private collections throughout the world.

This book has the value of being in part a catalog of a selection from Mr. Hooper's collection, until now almost unknown to students of primitive art. The larger number and the best of the objects are from Oceania, and include several rare Maori carvings of high quality. Other areas represented with a few objects are the Northwest coast of America, Alaskan Eskimo, and Africa. Mr. Hooper in the introduction and Mr. Burland in the text attempt, in an informal manner, to introduce the reader to some general ideas and facts about primitive culture, and to speculate on the history of the settlement of the Pacific islands and America, as the collector had done with visitors to his home in England.

In several chapters of reflections on the primitive artist and his environment, Mr. Burland hopes to prove the belief that this art sometimes compares favorably with the art of other ages by making analogies between modern social institutions and those of primitive peoples. He notes that the emotional needs of these peoples are little different from our own, that they are potentially our intellectual equals, and that the African finds a meaning in his institutions similar to that which modern man finds in his. The primitive artist is compared with the child artist in that he is subject to the pressures and control of his society as the child is subject to the direction of his elders. The general reader will be led to conclude that these cultures are, after all, comprehensible, and not so different from our own. Their customs and rituals will seem to be less grotesque and "savage" than was suggested in the reports of early travellers to primitive regions.

But this method of analogy also tends to dilute much of the richness of association that is possible when the art objects are

studied in terms of the specific culture from which they emerge. For example, much of the deep social and religious meaning of the activities of the secret society, to say nothing of the drama or even terror which they create, are lost if we must think of them in terms of our own clubs or lodges. How much more meaningful are the ritual masks when conceived as an integral part of this most powerful and often cruel means of insuring the solidarity and spiritual purity of the tribe.

The authors give some attention to social, geographical, and historical factors that have influenced the production of works of art, but they make scant reference to the sculptures themselves. Thus there is no real connection established between the art and the ideas; between the plates in the book and the text. The book is of value chiefly because it presents new material that is well identified by captions, but one might wish that the 68 plates of photographs were sharper in definition.

One is reminded by this publication of the existence of many other private collections which are largely unknown to students, and reminded that we have just begun to study even the material that is available of the art of primitive peoples (a much better phrase than simply "primitive art"). Hence, the problem of the description and analysis of primitive art styles conceived as an outgrowth of, and intimately connected with, a specific culture is yet to be solved.

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Herschel B. Chipp

#### FOLK DANCE

*Folk Dances of Tennessee: Folk Customs and Old Play Party Games of the Caney Fork Valley.* Flora L. McDowell. (Delaware, Ohio: Cooperative Recreation Service, Inc., n. d.) 64 pp. \$1.00.

The Caney Fork Valley of Tennessee, in which the descendants of pioneer families from Virginia and North Carolina lived in isolation for more than a century, held and developed a rich tradition. Flora Lassiter McDowell and her late husband, Lucien L. McDowell, who grew up in the valley and recorded its folklore for many years, had unusual advantages as collectors. They were recording at the right time, while there were still a number of older people who remembered how things used to be; they knew, as no outsider could, "where to go and what to ask about"; and they were personal friends or relatives of their informants.

The folklore in this pamphlet came from about twenty residents of the Caney Fork Valley. In a brief preface Mrs. McDowell explains how it was collected and edited. "No source has been used except the memory of the authors or their friends. Each song [play-party] has been many times rehearsed, and all errors, so far as possible, have been smoothed out by the combined work and criticism of many witnesses. So far, perhaps, as it is humanly possible, this collection is an accurate transcription of the actual performance of our ancestors . . . ." Judged by their own standards, the McDowells were successful. Their material is unquestionably authentic, and the composite versions of the play party games are musically and textually satisfying.

Anyone who has known of the quality and extent of the McDowell collection is happy to see this much of it made available to a wider audience. The "error-smoothing" approach to folk material, however, is guaranteed to raise the hackles of scientifically trained collectors, for whom fragmentary individual versions are more significant than the most perfect composite reconstruction. Folklore students, therefore, will note and make allowances for the limitations imposed and the problems presented by the McDowells' method of collecting and editing.

This pamphlet is, for the most part, a judicious selection from folklore that the McDowells had previously published privately or in *The Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*. The lack of an editorial statement to that effect need not trouble the recreation leaders, teachers, and folk dance enthusiasts who will use the booklet; they should feel nothing but gratitude to Lynn Rohrbaugh and his associates for reprinting this good material. The few folklorists who like to keep the bibliographical record straight might like to know that the twenty dances which are the heart of the pamphlet are reprinted from the collection of thirty-one play party games published in *Folk Dances of Tennessee: Old Play Party Games of the Caney Fork Valley* (Lucien L. McDowell and Flora Lassiter McDowell, Edwards Brothers, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1938). Besides the texts and tunes, there are playing diagrams notable for their clarity, and excellent descriptions of the action as it was remembered by former participants. Singing-in (partner-choosing) games, line reels, circle games, and children's games are included. Also reprinted from the 1938 publication are a one page account of the game of "Snap" and remarks on "The Old Square Dance."

The pamphlet under review includes one or more pages of each of the following kinds of folk material: childhood games, friendship



verses, riddles and fortunes, beliefs about witches, and songs. The riddle story (p. 16), baby games, and counting-out rhymes (pp. 10-11) are reprinted, with one omission and one addition, from the *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin* X, 3:1-4. Of the sixteen friendship verses, six first appeared in *TFSB* XIV, 3: 61, and one in *TFSB* XVIII, 1: 22-24.

In 1947 Mrs. McDowell published privately seventy folk songs, many of them from her own family musical tradition. (*Memory Melodies: A Collection of Folk Songs from Middle Tennessee*, by Lucien L. McDowell and Flora Lassiter McDowell, Smithville, Tennessee, 1947.) Six of the eight songs in the pamphlet are reprinted from that collection. There are fairly familiar songs like "My Good Old Husband," and several not so common, such as "Hobby, Hobby," a version of "Chasing the Reynard." With one exception they are rollicking in both text and tune.

Murray, Kentucky

Violetta Halpert

*Handbooks of European National Dances*, General Editor, Violet Alford: No. 4, *Dances of Portugal*, Lucille Armstrong, 1948; No. 10, *Dances of France, I: Brittany and Bourbonnais*, Claudie Marcel-Dubois and Marie Marguerite Andral, 1950; No. 18, *Dances of France, II: Provence and Alsace*, Nicolette Tennevin and Marie Texier, 1951; No. 21, *Dances of France, III: The Pyrenees*, Violet Alford, 1952. (New York: Crown Publishers and Chanticleer Press.) Each 40 pp., plates, music. \$1.00.

Simultaneously four booklets from assorted publishing eras arrived as representative of the eminent series of European National Dances. This series, originally published in London by Max Parrish and Company, is distributed by New York firms under an identical aspect. The samples here under discussion are united by geographical location. They make a much needed addition to the available repertoires of European folk dances, in view of the scanty materials available in particular on France.

The same scheme carries throughout the series, hence through these four booklets. The magic number four is adhered to in the inevitable number of miniature pages (4), of colored costume sketches (4), and of illustrative dances with music (4, occasionally 5). This uniformity has perforce necessitated some padding or spreading, but not noticeably so. Each volume is packed with the essentials of folkloric information on the geography, customs, and ritual practices of each area, on the typical musical instruments and costumes, on

dance occasions in calendar form, sometimes on groups of regional dancers. The second part deals with the dances according to a uniform scheme: abbreviations, poise of the body and holds, basic steps, then descriptions of selected dances. These selections include none of the rituals; they concentrate on the more popular couple dances. However, none of these are hackneyed and some show their ritual origin by their strange motions and archaic music, such as the Pyrennean "Era Pelha Ded Gat" (The Cat's Skin), derived from a witches' dance.

The dance "notation" depends entirely on verbal descriptions by the conventional method of fitting the words to beats and bar numbers which reappear in the separately printed music. The music also follows conventional patterns by piano setting of the folk melodies, ably done, it is true, by Arnold Foster. Sometimes the descriptions are clear enough, at times they are ambiguous. They would have achieved greater clarity through the addition of floor plans (only No. 18 contains four diagrams) and through mutually agreed-upon and clearly printed definitions of terms, such as "hop," "spring," etc. The ballet terms, such as "chasse," "pas de bourrée," and "pas de basque" require and receive special analysis, for they vary in the precise form from region to region. Once explained, their use in the notations expedites matters. The few abbreviations, as R and L (right and left) also save space. But one still has to shuttle back and forth between descriptions and music. It is regrettable that the editor and collaborators did not devise a less unwieldy method, some shorthand symbols if not actual dance notation, some means of lining up the steps next to the music, as per the present reviewer's method or the stick figure system of Joan Lawson in "European Folk Dance." However, there were doubtless good reasons, psychological and financial. Perhaps such a scheme would have upped the price of these by no means inexpensive publications.

It is evident that much thought and careful planning have gone into the series, not only into the format, but into the choice of regions and authors. These authors are well-known authorities on their area; some are natives; some like Lucille Armstrong and Violet Alford, are experienced folklorists. Though the texts are not all of equal quality, they are all reliable and colorful. The few pages on Pyrennean customs deserve special commendation. The same authorities contributed the raw materials for the music and the costume designs, which latter vary considerably in excellence and vitality. They also have provided short bibliographies. In view of their full knowledge they were confronted with a difficult task in boiling down their

materials for pocket-size popular editions. In the solution of this problem they have kept up the high standards of the rest of the series.

*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

*Gertrude Prokosch Kurath*

### MYTH

*The World's Rim.* By Hartley Burr Alexander. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953.) xx + 259 pp. \$4.75.

The late Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander, a professor of philosophy until his death in 1939, had this book on the "Great Mysteries of the North American Indians" in manuscript since 1935. It was apparently so alien to our field-ethnology emphasis in American studies as to be unpublishable. Now that the Boasian climate of opinion has become somewhat more temperate, the book has finally been brought out by the Press of the University of Nebraska, where Alexander taught for twenty years; it has been edited but not brought up to date by the author's son, Dr. Hubert G. Alexander; and it comes with a foreword by Clyde Kluckhohn giving it the anthropological imprimatur. "Hartly Alexander was not always appreciated by the orthodox," Kluckhohn says in his foreword, but he adds that perhaps now anthropology is returning a little to Alexander's concern with philosophy, universals, and mysteries.

Essentially, Alexander's book is an account of some major American Indian ceremonies as the dramatizations of myths, and from these myths Alexander deduces Indian "conceptions" as an unformulated system of religion and speculative philosophy. Alexander's principal concern is to show that "this native American philosophy" is not at all inferior to the great philosophies, and that Indian culture, if pre-literate, is neither primitive nor low, but a high culture comparable in aesthetic beauty and philosophic profundity to the great Western religious traditions. His method is a running parallelism between Indian religions and Graeco-Roman or Judaeo-Christian equivalents. Thus the Pawnee Hako ceremony is shown in a lengthy comparison to have "striking analogies" to the mysteries of Eleusis in ancient Attica; the Navajo myth of the creation of the sun is identified with the Greek myth of Phaethon; an Arikara ritual has a ceremonial hearth, "a veritable Hestia"; the Osage have a kind of Bellona; there is not only a Pawnee Orpheus but the Ojibwa *Midé wiwin* rites are a whole Orphic religion; an Omaha myth "reads amazingly like a fragment from an early Ionian cosmogony" and Dakota metaphysics are "a New World Pythagoreanism in formation";

Pueblo ceremonies have a Greek tragic chorus at one stage and resemble the Lupercalia at another; the Plains sun dance warrants an extensive comparison with the Mithraic mysteries; and an Omaha death song "rings like a fragment out of Greek tragedy."

If not as elaborate, the parallels to the sacred mysteries of the Jewish and Christian religions are just as unshrinking. The Mayan *Popul Vuh* is "like our own Semitic Genesis," and Alexander adds, of a creation myth in the Pawnee Hako, "Is not this a Genesis in the making?"; the Hako also has "the path dropping fatness," which echoes the Psalmist (65:11), it has a rite "definitely analogous, both in form and meaning, to the Christian rite of baptism," and it is generally "a shining image" of the Christian dispensation; there are specific Indian equivalents for all the Christian sacraments; the Ojibwa *Midé wiwin* has a myth of a divine Son with an Incarnation, Passion, and Atonement; and the widespread sacred pipe is very like the Christian cross, a mystic token of "temporal and spiritual salvation." Alexander does not seem to have known much about the great Oriental faiths, or these comparisons might have gone on indefinitely, but he notes such matters as a resemblance of the Aztec afterlife to the Buddhist Way, and Pawnee and Osage societies of old men devoted to reflective study, like gurus.

All this is not so random as it might sound in summary. Alexander was directly in the tradition of nineteenth-century British speculative anthropology of Tylor, Robertson Smith, and Frazer: his method is solidly evolutionary, comparative, and polygenetic; based on a theory of essential human identity, similar cultural expressions arising independently out of "the simple analogies of human experience," and comparable development. His comparative method generally takes in a number of Indian cultures before venturing across the seas: thus a holy woman is related to a sacred tree in various fashions among the Omaha, the Kiowa, the Oglala, the Creeks, the Seminoles; on the next page she is also "Rhea, Cybele, Demeter, Isis, Ishtar, the Lion-Queen of the Hittites, and the Ashtoreth of the groves of Palestine." The Sioux warrior acquires a warsong in a vision, and Alexander adds "Something akin to this was taught to Thutmosis, and Shalmaneser, to Cyrus and Caesar and Charlemagne, and to all who have followed the eagle and the double-eagle." Look at the Plains bison as a "Medicine power" for a moment and he becomes the sacrificial bullock, the bucranium, the "horns of the altar."

Alexander's method is not only comparative but dramatic, finding religious ideas meaningful only insofar as they are embodied

in ritual, dance, or drama. "A true view of the world," Kluckhohn quotes Alexander as once telling him, "must be cast in the particular—i.e. the dramatic mode." The Indian dance is "the great dramatic miming of the Mystery," and its symbolism can be understood only in terms of the ritual experience. It is probably for this reason that Alexander is one of the few writers on the Indian in recent years to appreciate Alice Fletcher's magnificent account of the Pawnee Hako (*Bureau of American Ethnology Report*, 1904), calling it "the most significant document for the understanding of Indian thinking we possess." Fletcher's unusual sensitivity to Indian religious experience, combined with the brilliance and eloquence of Tahirussawichi, her informant and exegetist, produced a remarkable account of the Hako and analysis of its complicated and richly overdetermined symbolism.

If Alexander's method has some of the imaginative power and grandeur of British speculative anthropology, it also has some of its characteristic defects and limitations. Although Alexander's avocation was field ethnology, the one ceremony he describes at first-hand, the Arikara rite of the Sacred Cedar he observed at the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota, in 1924, has the tone of a tourist account, and a reference suggests that he did not know the language, or any Indian language. Alexander's constant tendency is to spiritualize and prettify Indian customs, from transvestist homosexuality to war and torture. At one comic point he argues that the physical ordeal, the laceration and bloodshed, of the Plains Indian sun dance was neither original to the ceremony nor essential to it; he then notes two pages later that Catlin's account of the Mandan sun dance makes it obvious that the ordeal was initiatory, and thus both primary and essential; and he concludes undaunted:

Nevertheless, although this may have been the origin of the ordeal, it is by no means the conscious motive or understanding of it entertained by the Indians of today, or by those of the recent past. For to these it is entirely clear that the Sun Dance is in full sense a religious ceremony, and that the Drama of the Captivity and the Passion has a far more spiritual meaning than is involved in the mere test of manhood.

When General O. O. Howard, an old Indian fighter, reports the hanging of thirty-eight Sioux and adds that as they all sang their death songs "the noise of their deep swelling voices was truly hideous," Alexander reproves him:

Had the white man understood the meaning of the songs, or been able to grasp their melodies, they would not have seemed



hideous; for today our most competent composers turn eagerly to Indian themes for their musical inspirations, and our widened understanding shows in them much that is beautiful in sentiment as well as in philosophy.

As much as anything, Alexander's prose contributes to the old-fashioned effect, with its heavy reliance on phraseology like "nooned with achievement and upward zoned to the circle of Father Heaven himself" or "limbs rising repeatedly with the effulgence of ascension," and often it falls into straight iambic pentameter, such as "from whose black belly falls the reek of rain."

The real difficulty with Alexander's book is that it blurs distinctions. He is quite highhanded with actual texts, choosing the one that suits him with such justifications as "seems most intelligibly preserved" here or "preserved the most instructive" there. Alexander had no narrow Boasian objections to interpreting an Arikara rite with an Iroquois myth, say, and in each case he would choose the myth or rite which "represents the mystery in its primitive or pure form," or the one "which we may regard as exemplary." This concept of a Platonic text is an inevitable result of Alexander's philosophic idealism (which he also credits to American Indian culture as a whole), whereby the idea is primary, the myth is a later and partial embodiment of it, and the ritual a still later and even more limited concretization. The modern materialist view of the "Cambridge" classicists, which makes ritual primary and myth, in the Greek definition, "the things said over a ritual act," would stand all this on its head.

Starting from the valid recognition that American Indian culture is primarily ritual and ceremonial, Alexander tried to find or construct some antecedent myth of which the ritual is the "commemoration" or "the symbolical exegesis," tried to turn collective Indian *rites de passage* into "something intimate and personal, with an inward and spiritual relation at the heart of it." When he quotes Frances Densmore's account, from a Teton informant, of the origin of the sun dance, he fails to recognize that the origin myth is actually a ritual playscript or scenario, with the dramatic present tense changed to the historic past (as we imagine the Synoptic Gospel-writers did to *Urmarcus*). If Alexander had understood the ritual origins of myth, he would not have used a Dakota myth of the coming of corn to confirm chronology, nor taken a Zuni myth of the Seed People for tribal history of culture contact.

Fundamentally, it is not that Alexander's picture of Indian cultures is selective, that his preface admits that the material is "def-



initely chosen with the intention of showing his heritage and achievement at its best," but that it selects for the wrong factors, with an inadequate notion of what is best." We cannot fairly object that Alexander's Indians are never dirty or drunken, that acculturation and demoralization have not touched them, that they exist in a pre-European world, but we can object that they do not exist in *any* real world nor ever did, that they are Platonic ideas. As Kluckhohn remarked of Ruth Benedict's idealization of Pueblo culture (reported by Hoebel in the recent Southwest issue of the *American Anthropologist*), this is not the society as it is or ever was, but as it is conceived by the old men. Where acculturation impinges on Alexander's rituals, as in a Negro imitation in his Arikara rite, it is a matter of interesting local color, and the only acculturated phenomenon he takes seriously, the frantic and doomed Ghost Dance religion, he reserves for a melancholy two-page conclusion to his book, showing that with the failure of the "ghost shirts" to ward off bullets, the old tribal life became a closed account. Of unlovely or destructive rites like the Kwakiutl cannibal society, or desperate rites like the peyote cults, there is no mention in his book.

Ironically, the recent movement to relate American Indian patterns to the high cultures of the Old World has been going in precisely the other direction, not toward making the Indians more Olympian, but toward stripping the late Olympian accretions from ancient Semites and Greeks and finding that they look rather like American Indians. Where Alexander labors to show that the Plains shaman is a spiritual philosopher analogous to Pythagoras, such a book as E. R. Dodds. *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951) shows that Pythagoras and Empedocles were characteristic primitive shaman figures. The terrible, cosmos-disturbing mourning of Manabozho for his little brother that Alexander recounts is not analogous to the refined weeping of David over Absalom, or Demeter wandering in quest of Persephone, or even to the wrath of Achilles, but to a type of more primitive Near East material that Alexander does not seem to have known very well, the destructive mourning of Anat for Baal in the Canaanite Ras Shamra texts, or of the Babylonian Gilgamesh for Enkidu.

M. I. Finley's recent *The World of Odysseus* (1954) tried to construct a personality-in-culture profile of the ancient Achaians from Homeric study and anthropological reading, but Finley's anthropology lacked a focus in specific cultural configuration, without which it consisted only of tag-ends of identification: the Achaians resembled the Kabyle in their itinerant smiths, the Tuareg in their

attitude toward the children of slaves, the Kwakiutl in their prestige use of metal, the Trobrianders in their reciprocity of gifts. Many of us involved with the teaching of Greek epic and drama have noted the impressive similarities between ancient Greek and American Indian, particularly Plains Indian, culture, from a Kiowa wrath resembling *ate* to a hospitality complex very like Zeus Xenios among the Cheyenne. The comparative study we need would require not only a field experience with some Plains culture and a thorough grounding in Greek literature, but a solid knowledge of both languages. If we are to accept the theory of Benjamin Lee Whorf that all concepts are ultimately conditioned and limited by the nature of the language, matters of ritual and myth are really untranslatable, and Alexander's Arikara interpreter could not tell him the meaning of the rite in English because the rite only had its meaning in a Caddoan tongue.

Until we get this comprehensive study, Alexander's book—no less stimulating and rich for being limited and idealized—will have to content us, and at least it shows us that all our careful ethnology has left out most of the really important matters, and that they still await us, locked in those old-fashioned comparative and evolutionary studies that the new social scientists have thrown out with the bath.

Bennington College,  
Bennington, Vt.

Stanley Edgar Hyman

#### PROVERBS

*Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California.* Archer Taylor. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Folklore Studies 3, 1954.) 97 pp. \$2.50.

Once again Professor Taylor offers us fruits from his extensive background in folklore. The present study takes us into the field of proverbial comparisons and similes in California. Since this type of study has not been done to any appreciable extent, Professor Taylor's contribution is especially welcome. Taylor's work added to the limited number preceding it in this special field now affords the student of comparisons and similes materials necessary for further probing into this branch of folklore. We are in a fortunate position henceforth for the production of additional, worthwhile collections from many untouched areas.

The "Introduction" is informative. Professor Taylor reviews the merits as well as shortcomings of collections either suitable or unsuitable as reference works for the comparative study of proverbial comparisons and similes. Concerning one reference work, however, your reviewer does not share Taylor's point of view. Wilstach's *Dictionary of Similes* should not be overlooked when one is working

with traditional similes. A cursory check of the California list will show that Wilstach has a great deal to offer, not only for the literary parallels but also for the anonymous ones, the traditional. For example, of the sixty-four comparisons used by the ingenious writer Richard L. Greene brought to Taylor's attention, fifty have parallels in Wilstach's *Dictionary*. This should be of some interest and significance to scholars in this field, despite the fact that there is no sharp separation of art and traditional similes. The "Introduction" also has pertinent information about the varieties of similes and calls attention to several problems still to be solved in this field. Taylor informs us here, too, that a forthcoming collection of California proverbs will include proverbs that employ comparisons. This should be of considerable aid to the scholar.

Seventy-six pages are given to the "Comparisons and Similes." They are listed "according to the word following the signs of comparison *as*, *as much*, *like*, and *so*. After *as* and *so* this word is an adjective; after *as much* and *like* it is a noun," page 11. Taylor gives references to other works whenever he has found parallels. At the same time if a problem of origin or interpretation is still to be solved, attention is called to it. Taylor's arrangement with the helpful cross-reference makes the list easy to use.

The "Bibliography," pages 91-92, shows that up to the present there are not many good studies of this type to draw upon for traditional materials. Much work is still to be done. The standard collections of English, Dutch, and German proverbial expressions, etc., continue to be the chief reference works.

The last section, pages 93-97, is a "List of Contributors." This is an admirable addition to a work of this sort. The numerous unmentioned persons who often help in the compilation of such material are at last given some honor and reward by having their names listed even though the extent of each's contribution cannot be indicated.

*Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California* is a creditable and much needed work. Professor Taylor's comments and queries are always of interest and stimulating to a great many workers in the field of folklore. It is encouraging to all of us in folklore to see the fine facilities of the University of California made accessible to us through the university's present series of Folklore Studies. It is hoped the quality of the future numbers continues on the same high level as in Taylor's present work.

Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Stuart A. Gallacher

## RIDDLES

*An Annotated Collection of Mongolian Riddles.* Archer Taylor. (Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Series, n.s. vol. 44, part 3, 1954.) \$2.00.

Every reader who takes this book into his hands will be surprised by the fact that it was possible to find more than a thousand Mongolian riddles hidden in a great number of publications, mainly Russian: their existence was hardly known outside the very small circle of specialists of Mongolian folklore. Professor Taylor with his incomparable experience and mastery of the field has collected these texts, arranged them according to the R. Lehmann-Nitsche system, in which the solution is described, rather than given, and edited them with a wealth of annotations which is truly surprising. In fact, these notes are much more interesting than the texts, and although Professor Taylor refrains from presenting any theory of origin or spread of the riddle, a number of comparative studies could be written on the basis of his annotations alone. These notes do not only explain the Mongolian riddle but try to give the direct parallels in other Asiatic, and in some cases European and African, societies as well. Or they try to show how the same theme is differently treated either by different Mongolian riddlers or in different societies. By this method, Professor Taylor clarifies the degree to which Mongolian riddles are unique. W. Ruben proposed to introduce a similar method in the field of comparative study of folk-tales. It is the simpler structure of the riddle which seems to make this method more fit for riddles than for tales, but the method seems to deserve more attention as to its applicability, in spite of the disclaimer of Professor Ruben (in *Orient. Literaturzeitung*, 1954, no. 1/2, p. 64).

Among the special problems touched upon in the book, in an extensive note on the "Carol of the Twelve Numbers" (pp. 361-364), the author shows that the Sanskrit and European versions of the Carol are by now fairly well established, while intermediate versions still need more attention. The Mongolian versions belong to this intermediate group. It might be appropriate to mention that a number of Chinese versions exist which would have to be analyzed in connection with the general problem. I quote as versions known to me: (a) a "Song of the Twelve Hours" in Buddhist style, made in the Sung period (*Ming-chüeh Chan-shih yü-lu* 6, printed in *Taishô Tripitaka*, vol. 42, p. 704a); (b) another by the famous Sung philosopher Chu Hsi, quoted in the *Chien-hu-chi*, part 3, chapt. 3, p. 10a-b; (c) another one in the *Lo-hu yeh-lu* (quoted in the *Chien-*

*hu-chi*, part 7, chapt. 3, p. 12b); (d) an early one in the *Kao-seng-chuan* (quoted in the *T'ai-p'ing Kuang-chi*, chapter 90, vol. 7, p. 9a); (e) a modern one in *Min-su*, no. 83, p. 39f; (f) a "Song of the Twelve Months" with two verses per month by the famous historian of the Sung period, Ou-yang Hsiu (quoted in *Miao-hsiang-shih ts'ung-hua*, chapt. 1, p. 4a-b); (g) another one, sung by a prisoner, and modern, from K'ai-feng (Po Shou-i, *K'ai-feng ko-yao*, p. 117ff); (h) another one from modern K'ai-feng, with allusions to nature (*id.*, p. 124f); (i) a modern one, from South-Chinese Yao tribes, with allusions to flowers (Chao Yüan-jen, *Kuang-hsi Yao-ko chi-yin*, Peking 1930, p. 91-102); (j) one from modern Yünnan, with reference to a famous tale Ku Chieh-kang, *Meng Chiang nü*, vol. 2, p. 62ff); (k) a modern Peking song of the "Twelve Numbers" describing their graphic form with allusions to historical events (W. Eberhard in *Zeitschr. f. Ethnol.*, vol. 67, 1936, p. 240); (l) songs on the "Eighteen Black Ones" (*l.c.* p. 234-239). The colors refer to the colors of actors in the Chinese theatre; (m) "The Eighteen Red Ones," (n) the "Eighteen White Ones," (o) the "Eighteen Blue Ones," (p) the "Eighteen Triads," (q) the "Eighteen Small Ones," (r) the "Eighteen Beautiful Ones," (s) the "Ten Numbers" in relation to heroes from novels (all from Peking, in W. Eberhard, *l.c.*); (t) a "Song of the Twelve Months" in a traditional novel (quoted in W. Eberhard, *l.c.* p. 244-5). A bibliography of other modern texts is given in W. Eberhard, *l.c.* p. 247. Only some of these Chinese texts seem to be close to the Indian and Mongolian versions quoted by Prof. Taylor. Most of the others refer to figures of the Chinese theater or novel, or refer to the festivals of the Chinese calendar, and close connections with the Mongolian songs cannot be expected.

University of California  
Berkeley, California

W. Eberhard

*Erzurum Bilmeceleri* [Riddles from Erzurum]. Lutfullah Sami Akalin. Erzurum Lisesi Folklor Kolu Yahinlari no. 1; Erzurum Folkloru I: Halk Edebiyatı A, Bilmeceler. Istanbul 1954, 112 pages, 2TLira.

This little book is a welcome addition to the as yet relatively small stock of texts of Turkish riddles. The author mentions nine such collections in book form and four small collections published in journals. To these a few more published or unpublished collections may be added: (1) B.A. Yanikoghlu, *Trabzon ve havalisinde to plan-mis folklor malzemesi* (Folklore data collected in Trabzon and around



Trabzon), Istanbul 1943, p. 215ff (105 riddles); (2) Nasih Güngör, *Kastamonu bilmeceleri* (Riddles from Kastamonu), Izmir 1939 (704 riddles), (3) M. Halit Bayri, *Istanbul Folkloru* (Folklore of Istanbul), Istanbul 1947, p. 55-58 (115 riddles), (4) Hamit Z. Kosay, *Ankara Budun bilgisi* (Ankara Folklore), Ankara 1935, pp. 80-84 (61 riddles), (5) Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun and M. Ferit Ughur, *Konya halkiyat ve harsiyati* (Folklore and civilization of Konya), Konya 1926, pp. 221-233 (125 riddles); (6) Kowalsky, *Türkische Volksrätsel aus Kleinasien*, in *Archiv Orientalni*, vol. 4; (7) Zavarin, in *Drevnosti Vostocnye*, vol. 4, Moskau 1912; (8) Kunos, *Török nepköltesi gyűjtemeny*, vol. 2 (278 riddles), (9) Kowalsky, *Türkische Volksrätsel aus Nordbulgarien*, in *Jacob-Festschrift*, pp. 128-145 (60 riddles and a bibliography); (10) a collection of 260 riddles from Ankara (collection Mrs. Mediha Berkes), Kastamonu (collection Pertev N. Boratav) and Araç (collection Ihsan Altay); (11) Collection Mr. Orhan Aydin, Ankara, from Denizli (12 riddles), Amasya (67) and Boghazkale-Çorum (57); (12) Collection Mr. Bahaeddin Ögel in *JAF*, Oct. 1950, pp. 413-424 (94 riddles); (13) Collection W. Eberhard, from Çukurova (58 riddles); (14) Collection Mr. İlhan Başgöz (over 2000 riddles?); (15) A. S. Diamantaras, in *Laographia*, vol. 3, pp. 227-236: i.e. more than 4000 riddles in addition to the more than 2500 mentioned in Mr. Akalin's bibliography. His own collection adds another 807 riddles to this stock.

This collection, published in the local dialect of Erzurum in Northeastern Turkey, is a selection out of a stock of more than 10,000 riddles collected between 1950 and 1954 by students of the Erzurum High School and the Girls' Junior High School in Erzurum under the direction of Mr. Akalin. The author adds that the riddles are only a small part of his folkloristic activity; the folklore club of the Erzurum High School has, in addition, almost a thousand tales, 1500 proverbs, 1500 invocations and more than 3000 short songs and other texts. We hope that the author will be able to publish this valuable source material soon.

The collection is introduced by short remarks on the form, rhyme, and linguistic structure of the riddles, some of the main motifs mentioned in riddles and the occasions in which riddles are used. The author also proposes a classification of riddles according to their form: (a) riddles with one theme and only one answer; (b) with a different answer for each individual line of the riddle; (c) riddles in the form of a conversation, and similar groups (p. 6). The collection is arranged according to the first letter of the first word of the riddle, and in a number of cases variants are added.



The collection contains many riddles which are well known from other parts of the country, and a good number of thus far unknown riddles as well. In this respect the Turkinsh riddles exhibit the same characteristics as the Turkish folktales: there seem to be few local differences, perhaps due to the great regional mobility of the population. The wealth and great variety of Turkish riddles make a tempting object for an analytical study; on the basis of the material available now and the work of Mr. Akalin such a study could be begun.

University of California  
Berkeley, California

W. Eberhard

#### FOLK RHYMES

*The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book.* Iona and Peter Opie. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955.) xi + 224 pp. \$4.50.

Many among the 800 rhymes in this handsome book do not duplicate those Mr. and Mrs. Opie provided in their encyclopaedic *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. The present volume is designed not for reference, as was the *Dictionary*, but for pleasurable reading. The editors remark that "the passing on of nursery rhymes devolves upon the adult"; this second book is sure to aid the continuance of the tradition they have so well served with their first. The volume is charmingly illustrated with many reproductions from 18th and 19th century toy books and chapbooks. While the sources of these drawings are indicated in an appendix there is regrettably no attribution of the texts.

D. G. H.

#### FOLK SPEECH

*Down in the Holler: A Gallery of Ozark Folk Speech.* Vance Randolph and George P. Wilson. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953.) ix + 320 pp. Bibliography, index. \$5.

*Down in the Holler* is a study of the language of the Ozark people—its pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. But it is far more than that: it is a study of the people as revealed in their language. Here are their taboos and euphemisms, their likes and dislikes, their liveliness, their humor, and their good sense, presented in an anecdotal manner which makes rollicking good reading.

The materials for *Down in the Holler* were recorded by Vance Randolph, who has lived much of his life among the Ozarkers and

has written extensively about them. Professor George P. Wilson, former secretary of the American Dialect Society, collaborated with Randolph in the preparation of this volume.

The outstanding characteristic of the book is its completeness. Seldom, of course, does a scholar have the opportunity to devote a major part of his life to the study of one small cultural group, but Randolph made such an opportunity for himself. Because of his devotion, patience, and fortitude, he achieves in this study a completeness which can come only from long and intimate acquaintance with the informants.

The chapter on pronunciation suffers slightly because phonetic symbols are not used. For example, does the first vowel in *rosum* (p. 27) rhyme with *raw* or *row*? But the handicap is only slight, for the authors are concerned largely with phonemic substitutions, which can be adequately represented through respelling. The chapter on grammar includes some forms which are not necessarily social or geographic variants, but in a study such as this, which attempts to give all the non-standard forms in a dialect, the inclusion of a few standard forms is of small significance.

Randolph and Wilson are at their best in the area of vocabulary. The chapters on Survivals of Early English, Taboos and Euphemisms, Unusual Words and Meanings, Sayings and Wisecracks, and An Ozark Word List occupy about two-thirds of the book and make it the most complete record we have of the vocabulary of an American dialect. The chapter on Taboos and Euphemisms, for instance, goes far beyond anything else we have on American verbal taboos, but because it is so much more complete, speakers of other dialects are likely to question some of the definitions. Randolph may well be right, but a comparison with the meanings in other areas would help to prove him so. Some readers are likely to feel that the definition of *stone-ache* or *horn-colic* (p. 104) is too mild and that the authors may have incorrectly defined *duck-butter* (p. 114) and *jingle-berry* (p. 103), for all of these have different meanings in other American dialects. The song about jingle-berry tea would make better sense if jingle-berry, or dingle-berry, had the usual scatological meanings current in Ohio, Oregon, and Texas. Surely, too, *cut proud* (p. 104) is paralleled by *proud-cut* as an attributive adjective. And one wonders whether the widely-known folk story in which *step-ant* and *pissant* are substituted for each other is not known in the Ozarks, for the story would seem to help explain the Ozark form *step-ant*.

The chapter on the dialect in fiction is excellent, but it fails to be completely satisfactory because of its brevity. Sixty-three authors

are disposed of in the space of twenty pages. We must sincerely regret that Randolph, who is eminently qualified for the task, did not give a fuller analysis of the writing of the dialect.

Although there are shortcomings in *Down in the Holler*, they are few and minor. Its strengths, on the other hand, are many and major. The book will be a valuable addition to the library of the linguist and folklorist because of its solid scholarly contribution, but a much wider audience should find in it tremendous reading pleasure.

San Diego State College  
San Diego 5, California

James N. Tidwell

#### FOLKWAYS

*The Old Country Store*. Gerald Carson. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.) xvi + 330 pp. \$5.00.

In *The Old Country Store*, Gerald Carson has written a truly delightful and absorbing book that embodies a great amount of research: readings in remarkably divergent sources, a good deal of digging in unpublished materials, personal interviews, and actual field work. Although aimed primarily at the social historians and at the more literate segment of the general reading public, the book should incite in every American folklorist real pleasure and interest.

One chapter, "Sittin' Round the Old Store Stove," is an excellent familiar essay on a most important setting for American tale-telling. Mr. Carson knowingly suggests the various kinds of tales, with a gracious amplitude of samples, spun before the "voluntarily unemployed" audience in the country store. Certainly this lamented tradition was until recently one of the most virile in America's oral narrative performance. I have even encountered one store-keeper who was himself the star-narrator in his store, but my impression coincides with Mr. Carson's that the performer was usually one of the regular "sitters." Indeed frequently a chair of honor was considered his particular right and it was vacated as soon as the teller hove into sight.

Besides this specific chapter, there are no few short passages of particularly folkloristic value. Salted through the other twelve chapters are about thirty-five full-fledged folk narratives, primarily anecdotes, humorous and otherwise, and *sage*. The sources for better than two-thirds of these are cited in the notes. The others, about ten, I suppose, seemed too generally prevalent to warrant source citations. Practical jokes, popular witticisms, folk beliefs, folk cures, folk articles such as the madstone, street cries, and various folk practices are all

here. The reader can even learn the ciphers the grocer used to conceal the cost of the items he sold.

There is a sprinkling of words of nostalgic quaintness: *pas-sementerie*, *saleratus*, and *opodeldoc* (even with a receipt). The diction of the folk appears, but not so often as to be coy: *pindling*, *thank-you-ma'ams* (was mine the only region where a thank-you-ma'am was a bump rather than a passing place on a narrow lane?), and *the slab* (which I know as a measure of inaccessibility—"he lives two miles off the slab").

But I don't want to overemphasize the folk content of *The Old Country Store*. It is, first of all, a cracking good piece of history, tracing the development, flowering, and decline of a significant phenomenon of American culture. Mr. Carson divides the history of the country store at 1861, before which date the store-keeper usually made annual trips to some large center to purchase his year's stock and after which date he usually stayed in his store and purchased his stock from the drummer, who is also exhaustively studied as an adjunct to the country store. As history, the work is very informative, very thorough, and always well-written and entertaining.

The book is very carefully done. There are over ninety grateful acknowledgments, not counting the blanket acknowledgments to platoons of anonymous librarians. One appendix lists a number of old-time stores that may be visited as museums or still functioning places of business, "store-collectors," and a spate of general source materials (four tightly printed pages). Other appendices contain copious, intelligible notes and picture credits (the illustrations are numerous and good). And there is a rather thorough index.

No review is complete unless the reviewer "takes exception," and so I shall raise two very minor points. Mr. Carson seems to imply that the farm wife's custom of bartering eggs and chickens for produce from the store is of the past. Certainly the custom prevails, although the trading post is now usually a grocery rather than a general store. And although Mr. Carson describes the hazing to which the grocer's boy was subject, he does not mention the common hazing to which all other small boys were subjected by an eager team made up of the grocer's boy and his willing master. But these are trifles which in no way mar an excellent work.

The University of Kentucky  
Lexington, Kentucky

Wm. Hugh Jansen

